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**Differing Expectations:
A Study of Chinese Children's Integration into Elementary School in Quebec**

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**A Thesis
in
The Department
of
Education**

**Presented in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements
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ABSTRACT

Differing Expectations: A Study of Chinese Children's Integration into Elementary Schools in Quebec

Chen Zhongxiao

This thesis studies the integration process of a small sample of Chinese immigrant children in Quebec's public elementary schools. Specifically, it concentrates on the socio-cultural context of Quebec, and compares it with the Chinese home culture. It looks at the differing expectations of these two cultures, and determines whether they pose challenges for the academic and social achievement of Chinese children. The findings of the study show that Chinese immigrant children are experienced in facing a dual culture in their immigrant life. As China becomes the biggest immigrant resource country for Canada and Quebec, Chinese immigrant children are changing the composition of the Quebec classroom. The study also indicates that some teachers and educators are not very familiar with the Chinese culture, and tend to view the Chinese learner in a stereotypical way as 'inevitably destined for academic success'. There seems to be an urgent need for further research into ways to compromise the dual culture of the Chinese immigrant child.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The Chinese population constitutes a significant minority in Canada and is the fastest growing ethnic group in the country. According to Citizenship and Immigration Canada (<http://www.cic.gc.ca>), the Chinese population in Canada reached more than 1 million by the year 2000. The *Ottawa Citizen* (Oct, 27, 1999), predicts that the "nationwide census of 2001 is expected to show that the Chinese family of languages has replaced French as the second-most common language spoken in homes outside Quebec". Due largely to Canada's new Immigration policy, Mainland China has become the leading immigration resource country for Canada since 1996 (See Appendix 1 or Table 1). Citizenship and Immigration Canada points out that Mainland China will continue to be the largest immigrant resource for Canada for at least the next 25 years (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2000).

Table 1

Canadian Immigration by Top Ten Source Countries

Principal Applicants and Dependants

COUNTRY	1998			1999			2000		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank
China, People's Republic of	19,779	11.36	1	29,110	15.33	1	36,718	16.16	1
India	15,370	8.83	2	17,425	9.18	2	26,064	11.47	2
Pakistan	8,091	4.65	4	9,295	4.89	3	14,173	6.24	3
Philippines	8,184	4.70	3	9,170	4.83	4	10,077	4.44	4
Korea, Republic of	4,916	2.82	8	7,215	3.80	5	7,630	3.36	5
Sri Lanka	3,328	1.91	14	4,722	2.49	9	5,832	2.57	6
United States of America	4,773	2.74	9	5,528	2.91	7	5,809	2.56	7
Iran	6,775	3.89	7	5,907	3.11	6	5,606	2.47	8
Yugoslavia	1,172	0.67	40	1,490	0.78	29	4,719	2.08	9

United Kingdom	3,898	2.24	11	4,477	2.36	10	4,648	2.05	10
Russia	4,304	2.47	10	3,774	1.99	12	3,521	1.55	13
Taiwan	7,191	4.13	6	5,464	2.88	8	3,511	1.55	14
Hong Kong	8,087	4.64	5	3,663	1.93	13	2,857	1.26	17
Total for Top Ten only	87,470	50.22		98,313	51.77		121,276	53.38	
Total Other Countries	86,692	49.78		91,598	48.23		105,933	46.62	
Total	174,162	100		189,911	100		227,209	100	

Source: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/facts2000.pdf>

Recently, due to the new immigration policy of Quebec, there has been a more positive and welcoming attitude toward Chinese and other immigrants to Quebec. Among the opportunities given to new immigrants, studying the French language for free upon arriving is one of them. At the same time, integrating skills are taught them with courtesy of an allowance provided by the Ministry of Education. The landed immigrants can also choose to further their education by going to university in their new homeland, with a fair subsidy from the provincial government. In fact, in an article written in *The Gazette*, the city of "Montreal is a fast-growing choice for many Chinese because Quebec's government makes it easy for foreign students to get loans and Medicare." (*Chinese moved by Montreal*, July 15, 2000). Besides this very enticing program, other attractive conditions such as the particularly colorful and unique North American culture, the lower cost of living when compared to other parts of Canada, especially lower home rental fees, makes it a very attractive place indeed, and more and more Chinese immigrants choose to live in Quebec. So much so, that Chinese who are already landed immigrants from other provinces move to Montreal because of the above-mentioned attractions.

Since 1997, Mainland Chinese have made up the second largest immigrant group to Quebec (see Appendix 2 or Table 2). Traditionally, France has been the primary source for immigration to Montreal, mainly due to the language factor. Even this immigration pattern, however, has been surpassed by recent waves of Chinese immigrants. If one looks at Chart 2 carefully, it is clear that the Chinese population has become the largest group due to Taiwan and Hong Kong being included in the “top ten source countries”. For example, in the year 2000, the immigrants from Mainland China numbered 2,671, from Taiwan they numbered 329, and from Hong Kong they numbered 268. This brings the total number of Chinese immigrants to 3,268, compared with France’s at 3,054. These three population groups now form the Chinese population in Montreal, and they have become the largest group of landed immigrants in the Province of Quebec.

Table 2

Montreal Immigration by Top Ten Source Countries

Principal Applicants and Dependants

COUNTRY	1998			1999			2000		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank
France	2,432	11.03	1	2,704	10.85	1	3,054	10.87	1
China, People's Republic of	1,374	6.23	3	1,713	6.87	2	2,671	9.51	2
Algeria	1,426	6.47	2	1,576	6.32	3	1,995	7.10	3
Morocco	778	3.53	7	1,251	5.02	4	1,868	6.65	4
Haiti	1,006	4.56	4	1,165	4.67	5	1,210	4.31	5
Sri Lanka	442	2.01	17	786	3.15	10	1,189	4.23	6
India	896	4.07	5	909	3.65	8	1,166	4.15	7
Romania	687	3.12	9	985	3.95	6	1,140	4.06	8
Pakistan	531	2.41	13	822	3.30	9	809	2.88	9
Lebanon	466	2.11	16	630	2.53	11	698	2.49	10
Korea, Republic of	685	3.11	10	953	3.82	7	676	2.41	11
Taiwan	710	3.22	8	626	2.51	12	329	1.17	19
Hong Kong	861	3.91	6	315	1.26	21	268	0.95	25

Total for Top Ten only	10,855	49.25	12,864	51.61	15,800	56.26
Total Other Countries	11,184	50.75	12,061	48.39	12,285	43.74
Total	22,039	100	24,925	100	28,085	100

Source: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/pdf/pub/facts2000.pdf>

It is not difficult to foresee that this recent influx will have an increasing impact on Quebec's educational system, as more and more Chinese children enter Quebec's classrooms. According to Chen (1996), "Chinese immigrants have generally moved to Canada with expectations of greater economic well-being, political freedom and greater educational opportunities for their children" (P.2). The questions then arise: Will Chinese immigrants fulfill their expectations in Quebec? What will be the educational status of their children?

It is becoming increasingly urgent for educators and researchers to study Quebec's Chinese immigrant children, to understand their educational situation, to define the challenges they meet and will meet, in order to help them towards a better integration.

Problem Statement

This study focuses on the integration process of a small sample of Chinese immigrant children who are studying in Quebec's public elementary schools. From the children's point of view, I set out to determine if they do encounter difficulties in coping with the differing cultures of home and school.

Specifically, the research concentrates on the socio-cultural context of Quebec, and compares it with the Chinese home culture. It looks at the differing expectations of these two cultures, and whether they pose challenges for Chinese children's academic and social achievement. The study focuses on the expectations of both parents and the

school, and attempts to determine how the students cope with them, and if the differences affect their academic and social achievement. For example, it looks at school reports as well as how the Chinese children feel about themselves, their ability to integrate and to make friends, and their relationships with families and teachers, etc.

Personal background

This paper offers me, as researcher, an opportunity to reflect on my personal experience of the past few years, and how my academic studies at university have informed this experience. It is a compilation of my knowledge and understanding of Chinese immigrant children's education, and my background as a woman and a teacher of children from China, living presently in a North American French culture.

For almost ten years, I worked as a teacher in a primary school in Shenzhen city, in Southern China. Shenzhen is an "immigrant" city, a city which is developing very fast due to the Chinese "open-door" policy introduced after the Cultural Revolution. Twenty years ago, Shenzhen was just a small, poor village, very close to Hong Kong. By the end of the 20th century, it had become a metropolitan city in Southern China with a population of more than six million, and with the highest family income in the nation.

Students in Shenzhen city come from all over the country. They speak many dialects, but Mandarin is the only official language there. (Since it is very close to Hong Kong, Cantonese is the second most widely used language.) I actually had the opportunity of teaching Chinese "immigrant" children. Even for those who move around in the same country, there are still a lot of challenges awaiting them. For example, children have to leave their relatives and friends behind and live in a strange place with a

different climate. Because of the differences between the home and school culture, students cannot speak their mother tongue in school and may find it difficult to follow the teachers' instructions as well as to make new friends in a new schooling system.

My personal "immigrant experience" in Montreal gives me a new perspective on immigrants. Even though Canada is a unique society being a cultural mosaic, varying in languages, customs, traditions, beliefs, religions, art, technology, racial identity, etc., I still encountered struggles when I started studying at a Montreal university. As a minority student, I often found myself lost at times when one of my classmates would say something using slang or an idiom. and every one, but me, in the classroom would burst into laughter! Apart from the language barrier, I was not used to making presentations, asking questions or challenging the teacher in the classroom. I was silent in a classroom full of free voices, and I felt out of place. The Chinese and Western norms clashed inside me and I kept asking myself: "I was quite a good student in China. but what am I here?" This 'strange' feeling affected my life psychologically, and even my sense of self-worth.

I understand that if I want to integrate into a new society, I have to reject many of my cultural norms. However, being a visible minority, should I totally submerge my ethnic distinctness and become unnoticeable in North American society? Or, should I withdraw into an ethnic enclave where I can preserve a hermetic version of my Chinese culture? I live this dilemma and do not know how far I should go in adjusting myself to the new society. The most painful part is, as a mother of a grade two student in a French public primary school, I have to ask myself, should I encourage my son to learn the language and the norms of school, or should I preserve the ways of my homeland? If there is a prejudice against Chinese traditions at school, can I keep a totally open mind

and accept the values of the new society? If my Chinese traditions affect my son's schooling, should I totally give up our Chinese practices at home?

Another way in which my experience relates to this thesis, is that I have been working in my son's French school as a volunteer assistant since September 2000. Every Friday morning, I work in the library helping students find their favorite books, and registering their names while they borrow and return books. I also help the librarian repair damaged books. When there is an activity, I am called on to help students in Grade 1 and 2 with their handicrafts, or when they go to a movie, or to a museum. I help the teacher to maintain discipline while I accompany the students. These activities give me a great opportunity to observe immigrant children in a French classroom. I pay more attention to the Chinese children among them, both for the purposes of my research study and also because I come from the same cultural background. I feel I understand some of the complexity of their dilemma of being Chinese and at the same time being a part of the larger mainstream society.

My theoretical framework comes from my readings, guidance from various professors and peer discussions while doing my course work for the Educational Studies program at Concordia University. As a student in the Education Department, at this Montreal university, I have had the opportunity to learn about the 'white, western, dominant thinking' on the topic of minority status learning in North America, and on immigrant life. These courses have helped me reflect more about immigrants, especially Chinese children, their education, integration and attendant conflicts.

As previously stated, there are reasons enough to appreciate why conducting research on Chinese immigrant children is urgent and necessary. The particularity of the

educational system in Quebec makes this study a unique one. The situation of immigrant children in Quebec differs from other places in North America due primarily to language and cultural differences.

Hopefully, the findings of the study will be of interest to teachers and school administrators in Quebec who are encountering increasing numbers of Chinese children in their classrooms. Certainly, it may give them a better understanding of the social and cultural background of this specific immigrant group from Mainland China. The study may also be helpful to Chinese immigrant parents in Quebec who want to explore strategies for assisting and encouraging their children in the integration process.

The chapters that are contained in this study are as follows. In Chapter two, I first discuss the historical background of Chinese immigrants in Canada and Quebec; this will be followed by a brief introduction to education in Quebec, outlining the present educational situation in Quebec for Chinese children. In Chapter three, I reflect on Confucian philosophy and its influence on Chinese children as I find that it sheds light on the possible deeper conflicts that immigrant children may struggle with. Chapter four is a literature review that gives a theoretical outline of immigrant children's problems in their host country, particularly the problems of Chinese children in Quebec. Chapter five discusses the methodology that I have used for this research, and it is followed by the analysis of data in Chapter six. I conclude in Chapter seven as well as making recommendations for further studies.

CHAPTER TWO

Historical background

This chapter is divided into three parts. First, it discusses the history of Chinese immigrants in Canada and Quebec. Second, I illustrate a brief historical background of education in Quebec, and third, I provide a picture of the present educational situation of Chinese children in Quebec.

The history of Chinese immigrants in Canada (Quebec)

According to Ashworth (1988), the very first Chinese immigrants to Canada entered British Columbia in the late 1850s. In the beginning, they worked in the gold fields, and later they left their indelible mark in the construction of the Trans-Canada railroad. Some also worked in the coalmines. Others went on later to become merchants, some became house servants, and so on.

Due to racial and ethnic discrimination in Canada at that time, in 1880, the Anti-Chinese Association petitioned the Provincial House of Parliament to abate and stop future immigration of Chinese to Canada. In 1885, the government attempted to control immigration by levying a heavy head tax on all Chinese entering Canada. The tax was \$50 per head in 1885, and it was raised to \$100 in 1901, and \$500 in 1904. In the same period, the Chinese also lost the right to vote, and were discouraged from sending their children to public schools. It was not until 1967 that Chinese settlers were given the same opportunities as Europeans to become landed immigrants in Canada.

In the province of Quebec, the first record of Chinese people living in Montreal dates from 1825. According to Helly (1981), statistics show that in 1880, about 30

Chinese emigrated from the United States to British Columbia, Alberta and Manitoba.

Soon after they were followed by about 500 Chinese immigrants who came directly from the Guangdong Province of China, making up the first wave of Chinese immigrants into Quebec. From 1891 on, there were more and more Chinese immigrants entering the province and they built up a community, which was located on 112 West La Gauchetière Street, Montreal. This was where the original China Town was founded in 1910. Table 3 represents a government census record of Chinese people in Montreal between 1894 and 1971, demonstrating the increase in Chinese immigrants during that period.

Table 3

Number of Chinese in Montreal since 1894

Year	Number of Chinese people
1894	500
1902	700
1904	800
1921	1,608
1931	1,705
1941	1,884
1951	1,272
1961	3,998
1971	10,655

Source: Helly (1981), Les Chinois de Montreal

In the early days of immigration one of the main occupations for Chinese immigrants in Montreal was to run laundries. However, with the introduction of automatic-laundries many Chinese stores were forced to close. This led them to look for work in low salaried jobs such as factories. Some of them worked in grocery stores, tobacco stores and restaurants; others worked as salespersons, tailors, barbers and delivery workers. Only a few of them later became importers and businessmen. The first

generations of Chinese immigrants joined with many other nationalities to make up the work force of early 19th and 20th century North American society.

Since the late 1980s, the Quebec government has started a new policy of attracting a different type of Chinese immigrants. This policy is based on improving economic advantages for the province; that is, it attracts business immigrants such as investors and entrepreneurs. Thus, more and more Chinese who settle in Quebec bring revenue with them.

The history of education in Quebec

The history of education in Quebec is different from other provinces in Canada, first and foremost because it is French. According to Magnuson (1980), in the seventeenth century, Catholic missionaries from France arrived and started to instruct the original inhabitants, the Indians, in the mysteries of faith and to provide a measure of learning to the colonizers who were already there. Later, in 1760, the British military conquered Quebec and the English speaking Protestants came into Lower Canada as a minority. The conflict between the two systems produced an educational impasse in this province because of the wide differences in language and culture, some of which exist even to this day.

In 1867, upon the founding of a Federal Canada, a government document guaranteed Canadians an education in the religion of their choice (Protestant or Catholic). This led to a “religion paralleled language” educational system in Quebec, divided along religious lines into Catholic schools for the French and Protestant schools for the English.

The next major change occurred in the system of education with the Quiet Revolution of the 1960s. The state then dominated the schools instead of the church, and this, in turn, boosted the education system and started the process of changing a largely traditional society into a modern one. Thereby, the elitist system, which served only a limited population, was transformed into a public system, which served all school-aged people. With the implementing of Bill 101 in 1977, access to English schools in the public school was prohibited to immigrants and “language replaced religion as the dynamic element in education in Quebec” (Magnuson, 1980, p.9).

Today, the controversy surrounding Bill 101 seems almost forgotten. Immigrants send their children to French schools where they are welcomed into “Classes d’Accueil” for about one year so that they can “master” the language. However, a lot of Chinese parents and children think that the French language is not easy to master within a year, and immigrant students sent into a regular class with one year’s French from the “Classes d’Accueil” face enormous difficulties when trying to catch up with the rest of their compatriots.

The present education situation for Chinese students in Quebec

Chinese weekend schools

For Chinese immigrants, maintaining the Chinese language is a big issue. For thousands of years, education has played a very important role in Chinese culture, and most Chinese immigrants would like to preserve at least some of this culture in the form of their mother tongue. As a result, there are many Chinese schools in Canada, the earliest one being established in 1875 in Victoria. These schools normally operate at

weekends, are run by fluent Mandarin or Cantonese speakers from the community. The classes are offered to Chinese children or even adults who want to learn Chinese. Schools are run three to six hours during one/two days at the weekend. Almost a hundred years later, by 1985, there were over 50 Chinese schools in Canada with over 5,000 students. Figure 4 below shows some statistics relating to Chinese schools in major Canadian cities in 1985.

Table 4

Number of Chinese schools in Major Canadian Cities

City	Number of Schools	Number of Students
Victoria	2	200
Vancouver	12	1,400
Winnipeg	3	300
Toronto	10	1,000
Ottawa	3	650
Montreal	4	550

Source: Jason, Yee (1985), Overview of Chinese Language schools in Canada

Today, seventeen years later, the situation has changed dramatically. In Montreal alone there are now more than 6 Chinese weekend schools serving more than 3,000 students.

The classe d'accueil (or welcome class)

According to Ghosh and Ray (1995), the Quebec Ministry of Education established special programs fostering linguistic integration in French schools with the classes d'accueil (welcome classes) in the 1960s, supporting "Programme d'Enseignement des Langues d'Origine" (PELO), i.e., putting the heritage language program in the regular school curriculum.

As mentioned in the previous page, all immigrant children today are obliged to go to French schools when they land in Quebec. As a result, Chinese students arriving in Quebec, spend their first period of schooling in the “Classes d’Accueil” (“welcome class”), where they start to learn basic French. After about one year of “Classes d’Accueil” training, they may be put into a regular classroom. Normally, the one-year’s language training makes a significant difference to Chinese children, but often not enough. According to my observations and interviews, they still have to work very hard later on in order to catch up to and keep up with their Quebecois counterparts in the classroom and playground.

CHAPTER THREE

Confucian philosophy and its influence on Chinese immigrant

Confucius

Confucius (551 - 479 BCE) (Liu, 1955) was a philosopher, political thinker and educator whose ideas had a great influence over Chinese culture and civilization for more than two thousand years. Born in the State of Lu, during the dynasty named “Spring and Autumn and the Warring States” (770-221 BC) (Liu, 1955), his philosophy taught Chinese people about nature, the world, and human behaviour. Confucius was also instrumental in assisting governors and emperors by teaching them lessons on how to rule a State successfully. He made many wise statements and came up with theories on and about life, education and governing. All these wise teachings were compiled into *the Analects* and *The Doctrine of the Mean (Chung Yong)* by his disciples and their students, and these manuscripts served as the main textbooks for all schools in ancient China; becoming the basis of Chinese education.

Confucius’ most important contribution is to be found in his teachings. He invented the elicitation method of teaching and learning, nearly one hundred years earlier than the Socratic dialogue. He was also responsible for being one of the very first who challenged the spoon-feeding method of teaching. His idea of teaching according to the student’s aptitude is still regarded as an important educational principle in China today.

Confucian thoughts have spread far beyond the mainland of China to many Asian countries like Japan, Korea and Singapore. His influence in East Asian academia is much

like a combination of those of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle in the Anglo-European regions of the Western Hemisphere.

Confucius' influence on Chinese students

It is very difficult to measure the overall influence of a man who developed a philosophy that became one of the major religions of the world, and that touched the fundamental beliefs and principles of a hundred generations of people! His conversations were written down, and the spirit of Confucius' teachings was passed along from father to child and from teacher to student. Confucianism, its endurance through history and its dominance in Chinese culture for as long as two thousand years gives us an indication of why it is still so valued and utilized today.

Lin (1938) tries to summarize the major contributions that Confucius introduced to Chinese culture in his book *The Wisdom of Confucius*, in the following three points. First, Confucius created the role of the professional teacher for adults. Second, he developed not only the content of education but also its methods of delivery and its ideals. Third, he welcomed students from any social background, thus opening the way for social mobility through education in China. These were by far the greatest contributions that Confucius made to education and culture in China.

Comparing Confucius to major Greek rhetoricians such as Plato and Aristotle, one encounters an essential difference in how the Anglo-Europeans, deal with their predecessors' ideas. Plato and Aristotle rejected many of the thoughts of those who preceded them, notably the Sophists. Confucius, on the other hand, was a *constructive*

thinker who accepted his predecessors' ideas as part of his philosophy without criticizing them or reducing them to irrelevance. He frequently praised and quoted past sages and kings' sayings in his own teaching, giving due respect to his predecessors. In comparison, Ostler (2001) states that Plato criticized and even humiliated Gorgias and his concept of rhetoric. We also find that Aristotle's rhetoric was quite different to that of his teacher and mentor. It could be said then that Plato and Aristotle were dialectical thinkers who refused to accept the Sophists' thoughts as they were.

Throughout the history of Western Philosophy, a major change in perspectives has occurred with almost every subsequent philosopher. In other words, each school of thought in Western philosophy rejects the one, which precedes it. By contrast, Confucian scholars have generally used their predecessors' ideas to develop their own. This difference provides an important insight into the development of scholarly study between the East Asian, and the Anglo-European or North American (Quebec, for the purpose of my study – I would leave this out because Quebec particularly is probably more European in its thinking than the rest of North America) academic fields. East Asian scholars, like Confucius, have a tendency not to challenge but to admire and emulate their forerunners, while the goal of the scholars in Western academia is to constantly evolve new ideas, usually by finding flaws in earlier concepts.

Confucius' most influential book, *The Doctrine of the Mean* (*Chung Yong*) discusses how the daily lives of Chinese people should be led. For example, the idea of avoidance of extremes and a preference for the middle ground in arguments has directly led to indirect modes of expression. Prudence, caution, and preference for a middle ground hold a prominent place in the communication style that most Chinese use. When

the speaker selects this stance, she or he not only postpones the exposure of her or his own judgement of a situation until the final moment, but also avoids stating an explicit thesis. Thinking certainly is going on, but the expression of a clear message is held inside the speaker's mind until the conclusion. *Chung Yong* also places emphasis on the importance of humility and modesty in speech. In the East Asian view, going to extremes means demonstrating a bad ethos; words should be employed which avoid impropriety (Ostler, 2001).

The roots of the above practices can be seen easily in Confucianism. Liu (1955) explains that throughout his whole life, Confucius seldom looked to his own ideas nor did he encourage his disciples to have their own perspectives. He dedicated his love for learning and his energy to preserving the cultural and political achievements established by King Wen and the Chou - founders of the Chou dynasty. Confucius said, "I transmit but do not innovate: I am truthful in what I say and devoted to antiquity" (*The Analects*). To have one's own thoughts is not valued in Confucianism.

The aim of learning is to cultivate an ethos that enables the learner to enter the realm of the sages, and its process is to follow the path of inquiry and study. Unlike the Western educational process, Confucius recommends that learners should strictly discipline themselves to recognize the way that the past sages set up. Students are encouraged to explore and acquire the interpretations of ancient sages and their teachings, as students are considered to be immature. Thus, the reading of histories is crucial to realizing the truth (Ostler, 2001). The learner should discover the truth through hard work ethos; disciplines such as constant memorization, repetition, and meditation on the sayings of ancient sages are encouraged until the students realize and recognize the true

meanings found in these wise sayings. Thus, challenging the ancient sages' ideas or denial of their wisdom rarely occur in the process of learning.

Furthermore, in a Chinese classroom reading aloud is the most favoured method of learning. Self-cultivation is thought to be achieved through this steady immersion in reading and reciting. After numerous readings, the principle enmeshed in the texts is supposed to illuminate the moral principle inside the student's mind and heart. Thus, intuition (the intuitive process), not dialectical thinking, dominates the process of learning and recognition. To reach the state of full comprehension, the student must dig into deeper and deeper layers of the truth of the ancient sages' wisdom – a form of intense reflective thinking. As the nature of truth is believed to be universal, Confucius regards that the truth to be discovered in the text would be the same for everybody (Ostler, 2001).

The foundation of the Chinese educational system, then, is rooted in Confucianism. This way of thinking which results from the principles of Chung Yong (*The doctrine of the Mean*), is evident in the current methods of major learning practices in China today. The Confucian learning process does not follow the same procedure as that of the educational policies and teaching methods used in North America-Quebec.

One of the main differences between the Chinese and the Quebec educational systems is in how students are trained. In the Chinese educational system, when students learn they are not supposed to develop their own perspectives, instead, they must exert themselves to learn to recognize how things work as they are. By contrast, Quebec (Western) education encourages the students to establish their own viewpoints, and then to examine their study materials through them. In China, the system uses a uniform

teaching method and teacher-centered instruction; this results in passive learning and unquestioning students. As Confucianism promotes respect for the sayings and experiences of past sages and kings, so Chinese education is structured to absorb the already established knowledge or information of their long-standing history and culture. Success in learning is measured by discrete point tests of the established knowledge (Howard, 1974).

Thus, the modern learning process in Chinese academies still largely reflects the traditional Confucian one: there is very little influence from Western dialectic practices. Learning is thought to be achieved at the point where the student understands the texts. Above all, students are very quiet in the class: teachers deliver knowledge through lectures, and students mainly learn by rote what the teacher delivers. In short, the educational process focuses on improving thinking about the teachings of the ancient sages, rather than focusing on development of reflective skills as promoted in Western education. This form of education has an impact on Chinese children when they find themselves in the Quebec classroom. Even if they are too young to have experienced the Chinese education themselves when they arrive in Quebec, their parents certainly have.

In conclusion, there are several aspects of Confucianism that influence Chinese students' performance in the Quebec classroom. The purpose of Confucian education is not for individual well-being but to promote social harmony; the function of learning is not to promote the individual, or a particular cause, but to preserve harmony in society. This convention does not permit assertive speech. Speech is expected to be humble and courteous, following the norms established by *The doctrine of the Mean*, with harmony being the ultimate goal. Furthermore, the tradition of public speaking has not flourished

in China. Unlike in North American and Quebec cultures, there is a distinct respect for tradition and hard work (Chen, 1996).

CHAPTER FOUR

Literature review

Having done extensive research, I am devoting this section of my study to focus on the socio-cultural context of Canada (Quebec) and the Chinese home culture, in which, differing expectations pose challenges for the academic achievement of Chinese immigrant children. More specifically, it will concentrate on the expectations from both the parents and the school, and will attempt to determine the difficulties that Chinese children encounter, and how these expectations affect their academic achievement.

Difficulties immigrant children encounter

Culture plays a very important role in people's everyday life, and it determines patterns of learning, whether in the school or at home. According to Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), "culture is defined as socially shared cognitive codes and maps, norms of appropriate behavior, assumptions about values and world view, and lifestyle in general, [which] profoundly influences the way we humans think and act" (p.17).

Cropley (1983) has expressed his views on culture by stating that each society develops its own culture, such as characteristic behaviors, attitudes, values, aspirations, expectations and customs. Therefore, when immigrants arrive in a new country, they bring with them these norms, which inevitably clash and cause conflicts, to some degree, with the society they are entering or the receiving society. They have to superimpose themselves into an already established society and its norms. Cropley, suggests that immigrants need to find a compromise between the two sets of norms, "either by changing themselves or by persuading the members of the receiving society to adapt to

the presence of immigrants, or a combination of both” (p.9). However, none of these suggestions are easy to realize. If a mutual adjustment cannot be achieved, immigrants will remain outsiders, experiencing the consequences of prejudice and discrimination.

If the adults have difficulty reaching a balance in the immigrant process, how then do the children cope? Ashworth (1975), points out that the children of immigrants may be faced with two sets of values: those of the home and those of the host community. She states:

An immigrant child has all the needs of a Canadian-born child, the need for love and protection, the need for increasing independence, the need for friendship and peer acceptance. When the conflict between the values of home and school cannot be resolved or when the parents are overwhelmed by our affluent, materialistic society, the immigrant child suffers. (p.72)

Very often, immigrant parents expect their children to follow traditional ways, behaviour and norms at home. This is easily achieved when the child is young to have the values of the home take precedence. But when the children go to school, the school system often rejects the norms of the immigrants and their homeland, and this may create misunderstanding or even engender discrimination. As time goes by, the host community's values become more and more influential and immigrant children may leave behind their ethnic community, reject the ethnic language, customs and values. This may cause strong conflict inside the family and this in turn would lead to the poor achievement of immigrant children, in school. This very point has been elaborated in the

work of Bower and Silverman (1976), where they show that culture-conflicts experienced by immigrant students are major reasons for lower academic achievement in school.

Without exception, almost all the immigrant parents see a good education as the chance for a better future for their children. However, some parents are disappointed by what appears to be “looser discipline and lower academic standards”(as many Chinese parents used to say) in Canada because they make comparisons with the rigorous system used in their own country. Ashworth (1975), talks of precise numbers when she says that. “they feel that five years of education in their country is the equivalent of eight years in Canada. They expect their children to do well, put pressure on them to succeed, and do not always realize how difficult it is for a child who lacks facility in the language to compete on equal terms with a native speaker” (p.80).

Danziger (1971) studied some immigrant children and reported his results in his book *The Socialization of Immigrant Children*. He interviewed immigrant children on their educational aspirations and compared their answers to those given by their mothers. He found that the mothers tended to be less realistic than their children.

Downing (1973). examined reading methods in thirteen countries to see what the expectations really were. and found out that they differ from culture to culture:

Pressures on the child to learn literacy skills are much greater in some countries than others. There are clear indications that this is based on cultural values. In the scale of values reading gets a higher priority in some cultures than it does in others. The risk of emotional disturbance due to pressure to learn to read at an early age is considered seriously in some countries but is more or less disregarded in others. (p.81)

In the case of Chinese culture, which will be discussed below, children are to be engaged in reading at the earliest age possible, and there is a strong tendency to emphasize learning literacy skills throughout their education.

Difficulties faced by Chinese immigrant children

Like all immigrant children, Chinese immigrant children meet challenges in their host society. In their study *Chinese parents' perceptions of their children's literacy and schooling in Canada*, Zhang, Ollila and Harvey (1998), point out that “cultural background is an essential aspect of personal identity that interacts with the education one receives in a certain society”(p.3). They argue that because values advocated in the Canadian education system may not be consistent with Chinese cultural and educational values, immigrant Chinese parents in Canada may transmit to their children messages about expectations and educational success which differ from the messages their children receive in school. Zhang, et al. (1998), also state that,

Dealing effectively with diversity is a key issue in the present school system.

Literacy development and schooling of immigrant children should be examined within the socio-cultural context of Canada and the context of the home culture in which the parents and students were raised (p.2).

A lot of recent research shows that Asian students, especially Chinese students, perform academically better than their counterparts in North America (Chen, 1996, Gardon, 1987, Ogbu, 1992 and Stevenson, 1992). The research demonstrates that most

Chinese students, both back homes and Diasporas, believe strongly in personal effort, while American students (and their parents) tend to believe in innate ability. However, the emphasis on innate ability lowers expectations about what can be accomplished through hard work, and being happy at school is often considered as being more important than academic success.

Likewise, Suzuki (1983) points out that Asian and Pacific Americans are among the most highly educated ethnic group in North America and that their median family income exceeds that of White families. Asian students are viewed as a “model minority” who through hard work, patience and perseverance, have overcome the adversities of integration and have been successfully.

However, Flaxman (1983) states that “the Asian students are too often stereotyped as the “successful” minority, a perception that allows society to neglect their needs with a clear conscience” (p.5). Suzuki (1983) also discovered that school teachers often stereotype Asian students as quiet, hard working, and docile, which tends to reinforce conformity and stifle creativity. They are often insensitive to the special problems, needs, and unique learning characteristics of Asian students, particularly of those who are recent immigrants. Chan and Tsang (1983) argue that teachers perceive Chinese children through the stereotype and lack of appreciation for the diversity of the children. Actually, they say that “a child who is quiet in one setting may be gregarious and talkative in another setting” (p.43).

Immigrants often face difficulties in dealing with “officials” from the mainstream culture, who have different attitudes towards children and childrearing than their own (Shimoni, Clark and Este, 2000). Despite the success of the average Asian student in

Canadian schools, Steffenhagen (2000) reports much dissatisfaction among immigrant families with the Canadian education system, largely because students were not sufficiently challenged with homework and memorization. He points out that many Chinese believe their children's success at school reflects on their family's honor, as well as defining their future. Chinese parents feel if schools aren't providing enough homework, students will be wasting their time.

Quite often, high expectations from Chinese parents are interpreted as the source of Chinese children's academic success. However, critics suggest that it may place unreasonable pressure on children resulting in negative effects. For example, Li (1982), a schoolgirl from China who is studying in Canada now, writes about her learning experience in China:

It has been said that to be a Chinese student means a life of constant mental battles and hardship. Since the first day of my first grade up to the present time I have never stopped studying. To come home with a bad mark means to shame my name, my parents, and my teachers. It is almost like an eternal crime. Therefore, nothing was more important in my life than getting "A" in my subjects. The competition was high and it was difficult to be the top one. (p.25)

Expectations from Chinese parents

Chinese cultural values, beliefs and attitudes towards education play an important role in Chinese parents' expectations and concerns. Old sayings, stories such as fables, myths and fairy tales are often used to embody a cultural value or moral, and parents may pass them onto their children, conveying their expectations as they do so. In this section, I

try to use some of the old sayings as well as fables to describe the Chinese parents' expectations for their children.

High expectations

Immigrants from Mainland China make up a very special group in Canada, mainly due to the fact that almost every family has but a single child, so, parents' concern for and involvement in their children's education and future reach unparalleled levels. As Zhu (1999) points out, "parents are torn between rational and irrational ideas, and utilitarian and utopian views" (p.233).

Chinese parents believe their children can be the best and they always expect their children to do better than they did. There is a famous Chinese saying, "*Wang zi cheng long*", that is to say, expecting a son to become a dragon. In the Chinese tradition, a dragon means the emperor, the most royal and prestigious person. Almost all Chinese parents will describe themselves as "*Wang zi cheng long*"; they expect their children to be the best among the others, to become the excellent one. In order to reach this dream, they will do whatever they can to help their children.

The cultural value of a good education

Like most parents over the world, Chinese parents believe that education is important and it will offer their children more from life than they themselves had. They will do all they can to get their children to school and help them to do well in school. They view education as a preparation for a career and a way to maintain and respect their values.

In the history of China, education has been valued very highly and scholars always have been very respected. There are some old sayings for learners, such as

“Golden houses are in the books, pretty ladies are in the books”. “Nothing else will make one as prestigious as education does”.

Language ability too is highly commended, there is an old Chinese saying, *“A man who speaks two languages is two men”*. Chinese parents value bilingualism (Chinese and French) or Trilingualism (Chinese, French and English); they believe their children should be able to communicate with their family members and friends, and of course, language advantage is a desirable skill for employment.

The cultural value of hard work

Chinese parents value hard work highly. They believe that aptitude is not as important as hard work. Through working hard, one can achieve where others have failed. A fable called “Ben Niao Xian Fei” tells a story of a sluggish little bird who learns to fly successfully.

A group of little birds are learning to fly. Among them, a dull bird notices that he is always more sluggish than the others. How to catch up with his quick brothers and sisters? He thinks day and night and finally, he comes up with a good idea. The next morning, he gets up earlier than his brothers and sisters. He starts to practice flying right away, and he is the last one to go to sleep at night. From that time onwards, every day, he flies longer and tries harder than the others. Time passes quickly like this. One day, the dull bird comes first during a flying- competition. Finally, he becomes the best one. he can fly higher, quicker and further than any one in the group. His mother is very proud of him and she loves him the most among all her children.

This fable values diligence as the key element towards success. It also reflects the Western saying: practice makes perfect.

“Yu Gong Yi Shan” in Chinese means a silly old man who wants to move mountains. Here is the famous fable:

Once upon a time, there was an old man named “Yu Gong”(silly man). His home was located between two big, high mountains, and it was very inconvenient for him and his family members to go out. So, he decided to dig the earth and move the two mountains away. There was another old man in the same village named “wise man”, he heard the news and came to persuade him: “How can you, as an old man, move the two mountains? Why do you not just move your house instead?” Yu Gong answered: “I am old now, but I have sons and grandsons, and my grandsons will have their sons too, there will not be an end for my family. These mountains will not grow by themselves, but our strength grows all the time. I may not dig too much each day, but if I dig it everyday and night, and my sons and my grandsons do the same as me; if we continue from generation to generation, there will be a day when we will get rid of these mountains.”

So, Yu Gong led all his family members to dig the mountain day and night. His fortitude, spunk and courage moved two angels in heaven. They decided to help him, and one night, they carried the two mountains to the east sea. – Our lovely “silly man” finally gets rid of the two mountains.

The spunk of the “silly man” encourages the Chinese from generation to generation. Chinese parents will always tell their children the story of “silly man” and ask them to learn from him. Anything you do in life, any difficulties you meet in your life.

just regard them as big mountains and make up your mind to get rid of them. If you are confident and work hard enough, you will surely succeed.

High parental investment and sacrifice

Chinese parents give up everything for their children's education by taking much care, investing a great deal of attention, and making sacrifices. They will work very hard so that they can send their children to better schools, and so that they will be able to put them through university. They tell their children that if they can do well in school, the parents will do whatever it takes financially to give them these opportunities. Very often, parents decide to move so that their child attends a better school.

There is a fable that tells a story of moving. It is a story about the mother of a famous ancient Chinese philosopher and educator, Mengzi.

When Mengzi was young, he lost his father. He and his mother lived in a shanty close to the cemetery. Mengzi's mother found her son playing with the wild kids among the tombs. She was quite unsatisfied, and moved closer to a market in the town. Later, she found her son was influenced by the businessmen, and talked about money and had no intention to study. She decided to move again. This time, she chose to move close to the royal school, and her son started to learn from students with knowledge, and concentrated on his studies. Mengzi's mother was very satisfied, and she became the model for Chinese parents from generation to generation.

The society is abundant and complicated, according to Mengzi's mother. Parents must do their best to choose the environment for their children carefully. This is exactly the reason for so many Chinese parents immigrating to Canada. They believe the educational system in Canada is better than in China, and that their children will obtain a

brighter future if they are educated in Canada. Chinese parents believe that “*anything close to red will eventually become red, and anything close to black will eventually become black*”. Thus they pay a lot of attention to the environment their children study in and the friends their children make. This may cause conflict between parents and children, because sometimes children have no freedom to choose their friends. On the other hand, in Quebec, the society and school encourage children to choose and make their own friends freely, and expect all young people to live together harmoniously.

Respecting elders and teachers

From a historical and cultural point of view, China is a country with a long-standing Confucian culture. Confucian philosophy has had a long and profound influence on education. “Father is supreme” is the message of Confucian doctrine, teaching children to show great respect and obedience to their elders.

In his book, “The art of life”, Lin (1965) points out that unlike Western society, upon first meeting, Chinese people always ask each other, “how old are you?” Why is this? Because they want to distinguish who is older immediately, and then the other can pay his respect to the older one in the following conversation.

Chinese pay deep respect to their teachers. There is a saying “*If somebody happened to be your teacher once, he is your teacher for a life time.*” That means every time you meet him, you show your great respect to him, treat him as your loving teacher, your benefactor.

Chinese parents also teach their children to be modest, to learn from life, to learn from everybody around them. The famous Confucian saying “*Three people together, there must be a teacher for me among them*”. This means that anybody knows something

better than you and can teach you. This saying teaches people to learn everywhere, learn every day, and keep improving in order to become rich and wise.

Chinese parents want their children to be respectful of others not only at home, but also at school. They want their children to play peacefully with others and obey their teachers. If their children's school report is not good enough, they think the family is shamed and that they have lost face by their children's bad behavior in school.

What about the school's response to the children?

Expectations from schools

According to Delgado-Gaitan and Trueba (1991), cultural values of the mainstream society are transmitted in school. Schools are expected to train children socially and academically, and classroom settings provide the context in which children integrate: culture, language, cognition and skill. The classroom lessons are framed by cultural codes. For example, reading is taught in many cultures, but how, where, when and what one reads are determined by the culture in which one participates. Delgado et al. say,

...Social rules of behavior related to the task of reading are culturally bound, and schools are established to transmit those accepted norms of conduct related to the learning of any academic subject in accordance with the belief of the dominant culture. (p.116)

Likewise, other researchers such as Leacock (1969) and Spindler (1974) also point out that in school, a teacher's instructions and a student's activities in the learning process are

guided by broader cultural norms that ensure the learner will conform to the behaviors required by the dominant culture.

However, Wolfgang (1975) points out that schools are often handicapped when coming into contact with immigrants because of language and cultural differences. "Members of the school community often have little direct knowledge of the immigrant's educational system- teaching methods used, curriculum, values stressed, expectations of students by the school or parents, or role of the parents in the school" (p.1). Very often, teachers are unable to comprehend the social, cultural or emotional problems of immigrant children, and they may ignore the children's past learning experiences and label them as "slow learners". This may end in students' entering special education classes, dropping out early and becoming hostile toward schools and schooling. Ramcharan (1975) states that,

...It is a fact of Canadian society, notwithstanding the positive effects of cultural pluralism for all groups, that the education system through which the immigrant seeks mobility forces him to a greater or less degree to separate himself from his community and his family. To that degree he also risks losing his very identity (p.100).

Ramcharan continues to argue that it is very important for teachers to know something about the culture, values, and norms of the ethnic groups in their classrooms. In fact, teachers play important roles in students' integration. By knowing the students' backgrounds, teachers can utilize the information in programming a learning environment that would be less alien to them, and accelerate their overall adjustment to their new society.

Therefore to conclude, even if the expectations from home and from school are not being fully met at the present time, parents, schools and children can all learn from “Yu Gong”, the “silly man” in the Chinese fable. It is possible to remove these barriers long term, - hopefully, the mountains that are in the way of better integration will go away with the help of the entire community.

CHAPTER FIVE

Methodology

Research questions

This study mainly concentrates on the expectations of both parents and teachers on Chinese immigrant children, and it attempts to discover how this in turn affects the children's academic and social achievement.

My research questions are: Are Chinese immigrant children able to keep the balance between the Chinese home culture and the Quebec school culture? Are they comfortable with immigrant life or do they feel stressed because they have to meet the demands of both cultures? Can they meet the expectations from both and be successful socially and academically?

Other questions that will be considered are: What do Chinese children think of their home culture? What do they think of the multicultural classroom? How do they respond to the expectations from both parents and teachers? What are their dissatisfactions and their worries? What are their wishes and expectations of parents and of school? Do Chinese students feel pressured by their parents' high expectation? Are they tired of the academic centered and learning orientated pattern of Chinese traditional education? Do they prefer to stay at school or at home?

My hypothesis is that, Chinese children do quite well in school and they meet the teachers' expectations too. However, many teachers lack sufficient information about the Chinese cultural background, and rarely have teachers developed any specific programs for Chinese students in their class. Most children fail to reach their parents' expectations

because they are too strict and high, and these expectations, from home and from school, are not met. This may cause problems for the children's integration into the mainstream society, and may also cause conflict in their immigrant lives.

Research settings

My first research site was a Chinese parochial school in Montreal, where I worked as a Chinese weekend-school teacher. This school employs about 40 teachers and administrators, with more than 600 students enrolled. Classes are held on Saturday afternoons from 2:00pm to 5:00pm. As a Chinese teacher, I met a lot of parents and students, and built up good rapport with them. They provided an easily accessible rich source of information for this research study.

The classes included two hours of Chinese reading, writing and comprehension. After that, there was a one-hour class in painting, calligraphy, fast calculations and English. There are also social activities like folk dancing, singing, drama, Chinese traditional handicrafts, playing musical instruments and practicing martial arts like Kung Fu, Qigong and Tai Chi. Students could choose any of these activities. There was a lounge for parents who waited for their children. It offered Chinese tea, traditional food such as Tofu, and Chinese newspapers and videos. The school itself was actually a Chinese cultural center where parents came to spend the afternoon and socialize.

The second research site was a French public school located in the Cote St-Paul district in Montreal. It is a school of about 400 students and 22 teachers, and the students normally come from middle class French speaking families. The school has a good reputation in the district because of the excellent management and the care given by the

teachers. This was the school where I worked as a volunteer. It was very convenient and easy for me to make contact with the teachers in this school where I volunteered and I became quite familiar with the goings on in the school. Indeed, the teachers were very eager to participate in my research, and they gave me a lot of support and encouragement.

Interview questions

The interview questions that I used reflect extensive literature research and also an examination of current issues within the Chinese immigrant community. The three objectives identified for the interview are: first, to examine how parents understand their children's needs, and how they help their children with these needs (see Appendix 3). Second, to discuss with Quebec public school teachers about Chinese children's performance in order to try to determine which strategy has been used in facilitating the children's integration process (see Appendix 4). Third, to obtain information on the interpretation of Chinese immigrant children's differing expectations from their parents and from their schools (see Appendix 3-5).

The questions put to the children were selected carefully, respecting their age and language competence. All three questionnaires were designed to obtain the most valid and reliable responses (see Appendix 3-5 for Questionnaires).

Sampling procedures

This study involved a small sample of new Chinese immigrant children in Montreal's public primary schools. The first sample consisted of 10 new Chinese immigrant children. I chose these students for the following reasons:

- a. These students were from my grade 2 Chinese-class in the Chinese parochial school where I taught on Saturday, therefore it was easy for me to meet them, and interview them.
- b. This group ranged in age from 7 to 10. This age was the average age for Chinese new immigrant children. The largest immigrant adult group from China is composed of independent technical workers whose age range is normally less than 40 (Immigrant applicants aged over 40 reduce points: 1 point less for each year over forty. According to the immigrant officer's points calculation, if one's rating is less than 76 points, he/she will not be granted an immigrant Visa). So, their children's ages are normally less than 10 years old.
- c. I chose this group of children also because they were at an age when world-views start to be formed, and they were able to notice differences in both cultures. They also observed new things happening every day in their new environment.

The second group that I used for this thesis study consists of 10 parents from the Chinese School. These parents were chosen because I already knew them through their weekly visits to the school and I often chatted with them about their children's education in both their French and Chinese schools. They were all immigrants from Mainland China, and most of them were scholars and university students in Montreal. Almost all the parents spoke English, but only one spoke good French, because he needed to use it at work. Most of these families had only one child except one family, who had two. These

parents were “middle-class” in terms of their values and attitudes, although not necessarily in actual social class in the present society due to their lower income levels.

The interviews carried out with the children and parents were held in either the Chinese school or at their homes, in order to enable them to talk more freely. Before each interview I made it clear, that I wanted to know about the children’s French medium schooling: that the research had nothing to do with the Chinese school, or with me personally. Chinese (Mandarin or Cantonese) was used with the parents and Chinese and French was used for the children according to the interviewee’s preference.

The third group was made up of 4 schoolteachers from the Montreal French public schools system. Since I did not know teachers in other public schools, the teachers from my son’s “Classe d’Accueil” and from my son’s French medium class were my first resource. They were all experienced teachers with a minimum of 13 years’ teaching experience. They were all female teachers, as are the majority of teachers in primary schools in Quebec. They all knew me because I had volunteered my time assisting them with their school activities and with outings as a ‘volunteer parent’. Since teachers in Quebec often do not speak English, I used French so they could express themselves freely.

All interviews were tape recorded because:

- a. I am not good at speedwriting, and I consider writing while people talk to be neither practical nor polite.
- b. This is the most convenient and most economical way of keeping an accurate record.
- c. It is less intrusive than a video camera with voice tape.

Ethical considerations

Written or oral consent was obtained from the students' parents and from the teachers involved in the study. Written consent is not a familiar convention for many Chinese immigrants. A request for written consent would be interpreted as meaning that this study poses some sort of risk, which it does not. It is for this reason that it was considered more appropriate and less intrusive to obtain oral consent from at least some of the parents. It was explained to the parents that graduate students are required to obtain the consent of those they include in their studies. They were given a choice as to how to provide it.

During the process of informing the parents and teachers about this study, they were told that if they agreed to participate initially, they were also free to discontinue at any time. Similarly, they could request that I stop speaking with their child at any point during the period that the study was being carried out. Since a rapport had already been established with all the participants in this study, there was no discomfort that appeared.

I informed the parents and teachers who wished to read the thesis that they would be provided with a copy. I also asked if they would like to discuss the results once the study was completed and I told them that a report would be made available to the administrators of the Chinese weekend school, and to any of the teachers who requested it, as well as to the school administrators.

I made it clear that prior to completing the written thesis, the results would be shared with parents and teachers in order to confirm my impressions and interpretations

of the results. I also assured them that pseudonyms would be used at all times in all written and oral reports of the study in order to protect the participants.

Analysis of data

First, excerpts from the transcripts of the interviews were translated into English.

Then, the data were analyzed according to the following plan:

1. What are Chinese parents' expectations of, and family influences on their children? Looking at:

- a. Chinese traditional education's influence
- b. The background and situation of new Chinese immigrants.
- c. The reasons for parents' high expectations.

2. What are the children's expectations of their parents?

Analyze Chinese children's perception of their parents.

3. What are teachers' expectation and concerns for Chinese immigrant children?

- a. Analysis of a school report card, referring to students' success and failure.
- b. With what criteria the school judges a child's language ability, mathematical aptitude, communication skills, and classroom performance?

4. What are the children's expectations of their teachers?

Analyze Chinese children's perception of teachers and schooling.

5. What are the children's concerns based on the two different cultures? Do they have difficulty keeping a balance in their life?
6. What about the Chinese children's academic and social achievement in a Quebec public primary school context, according to teachers' perspective?
7. What are the strategies used in helping the Chinese students?

Limitations of the study

The study may be limited since it only included children and parents from one Chinese school in Montreal. I understand that the interviews with the students and their parents may even be biased, since I was a teacher of many of the children in the study. Another limit to the study is the fact that the students were chosen from Chinese families who insist that their children become literate in Chinese. There are some Chinese people, though few, who do not send their children to Chinese schools for reasons such as time constraints, French "overload" stress, distance, financial problems or a preference for teaching their children at home. The interviews with my son's teachers may have also created a bias because of the fact that I am one of their student's mothers. Since my son is a good student, and well liked by his teachers, the risk to him, however, was considered negligible.

CHAPTER SIX

Analysis of data

Interviews with Chinese parents: Summaries and examples

Ten parents of the students from the Chinese weekend school participated in my research. Here are the main characteristics of the parents.

Table 5

Main characteristics of the interviewed Chinese parents

Age	From 32 to 45	
Gender	9 females	1 male
Employment	8 unemployed	2 employed
University education	8 studying at university	1 completed degree
Number of children	8 have only one child	2 have two children
Foreign language ability	8 speak English	2 speak both English and French (English is more fluent)
Marital status	9 married	1 divorced
Occupation	Varies from restaurant worker to computer engineer	
Education	Varies from College graduate to Ph. D.	

The interviews with the parents brought out three salient factors:

First, new Chinese immigrants have very high expectations for their children. Eight of those interviewed had only one child, and had all the other family members (their parents, both parents' parents, uncles and aunties, etc.) All of them expected the only child to be an excellent one, one who could fulfill their dreams. They perceived education as the key to their children's future. They expected their children to be good students, to apply themselves to their studies, and to do more or at least whatever their teachers requested.

Second, I found that the Chinese parents' strong parental support for education was opposite when compared to the limited contact that they had with their children's

school. Nine of the parents interviewed admitted that they were seldom involved in school affairs; they did not even go to the regular parent-teacher meetings, mainly due to the language barrier and the gap between home and school culture.

Third, new immigrant parents were all struggling to make ends meet in their new country. The main problems were language and culture as the French language in Quebec becomes a serious barrier for the English-speaking parents to get involved in the society. Some of them were under difficult financial circumstances because it was hard to find a job. The situation influenced the way in which the Chinese parents were bringing up their children, and this could be the main reason leading to family conflicts.

The following table shows my summary of the main concerns of Chinese parents, generalized from the parents' interviews.

Table 6

Chinese parents' main concerns

Parents' concerns	Yes	Sometimes	No
High expectations for child	10	-	-
Worry about child's academic performance	7	3	-
Assist child's home work	5	5	-
Give additional home work for child	10	-	-
Understand child	2	6	2
Able to help child	1	4	5
Satisfied with child's performance at home and at school	-	5	5
In contact with school teacher	-	4	6
Participate in school affairs	-	-	10
Struggle to make ends meet	10	-	-

In the following section, I will give some case descriptions and interview details to explain my findings.

High expectations

All the Chinese parents I interviewed held high expectations for their children. 100% of them wanted their children to have a better education, a better job, better well-being and a better future than they themselves had had. These expectations influenced the way they perceived and responded to the daily experiences they encountered in the larger society, especially their children's education.

Case 1

When asked about her expectations from her son, Huan's mother said,

H: *He should be better than us, of course!*

ME: *Why?*

H: *He is in North America now, in a better educational environment than us. He is the only child in our family, and we work very hard to support him for him to succeed!*

ME: *What do you mean when you mention "success"?*

H: *To be a successful person in the society. To graduate from the most prestigious university, to have a decent job and salary.*

ME: *What do you expect him to be when he grows up?*

H: *We wish he becomes a doctor or a lawyer.*

Huan is a lovely little seven-year-old boy. He loves painting, and his drawing won the Second Prize in the Chinese children's painting competition in November 2001. He came to Montreal with his parents when he was 4 years old. He started kindergarten and went to the 'classe d'accueil' in Montreal. Even though he is still

very young, he shows great talent in his painting; in my opinion, he loves art more than medicine and politics.

Case 2

Yang is a little seven -year -old girl. Her parents are university students and having only one daughter. They pay a lot of attention to her education. They want her to be the best in the class. When I asked for her expectation, her mother told me:

She should always be the top in her class. Why not? She has the potential to be if she works hard. I always told her to depend on herself in studying, because both her daddy and me do not speak a word of French. I support her by buying everything she wants, anything, no matter what, food or clothes, but I cannot help her with her French. Instead, we want her to study hard and we show her our need for her whenever we go out. We ask her to translate for us and use it as her motivation to study well. It is too early to say what we want her to be now, but our present goal is to let her to be the best student. Only if she is the best one in the class, she will be proud of herself and she will not feel inferior because she is a minority. She will gain more confidence in everything she does in her life because she succeeded academically.

Case 3

Ge is a ten-year-old girl whose parents want her to become a violinist. Her mother works as a clerk in a company, and studies computer science in the university at the same time. Twice a week, her mother takes Ge to her violin teacher no matter how busy she is. Her mother accompanies her not only during the lesson, but also during her practice at home. Three years' of very strict practice, countless days and nights'

rehearsing, and Ge finally gained a Silver Medal in the Canadian National Violin Competition in the summer of 2001.

When asked why such high expectation for their child, Ge's father said:

We believe in our child. We think she can do better. High expectations are a motivation for children. It is a traditional way to push the children. I remember when I was young, my mom always told me, you can be the top one in the class if you work hard enough, you will be the best!

Chinese parents' high expectations are implemented through attention and surveillance of their children's studies. The main patterns are:

Give additional homework

Besides the homework from school, all the Chinese parents I interviewed, without exception, gave some additional homework to their children. For example, they gave their children arithmetic lessons ahead of school schedule and they gave them a lot of practical exercises. The exercises were taken from exercise books, or could also be written by parents themselves. Chinese learning is an important task for the Chinese children at home. Parents buy all kinds of Chinese textbooks and make their children study the texts and recite them. Normally, after reciting, the children have to learn all the new words in the text and write the text out from their memory. Other additional homework may include English learning, painting, playing musical instruments. To facilitate the French learning, the parents ask their children to go over the lesson that the teacher taught at school even though they do not know French themselves.

When I asked them why they gave additional homework to their children, the parents' main responses were:

- a. Some parents found that there was not enough work to occupy their children, and the children ended up playing at home for most of the time after school.
- b. Some parents thought it was important to develop the habit for the children to study everyday after school. To get used to sitting at a desk and working develops a good sense of obligation.
- c. Children love to play. Given the choice, they will end up by playing or watching TV all the time. Play is good sometimes, but playing all the time is not as good as developing a studying habit, or learning something tangible.
- d. Additional homework made the child feel well prepared and knowledgeable for the school course, it helped the child develop self-esteem. When taught something ahead of the school syllabus, the child would find he already knew what the teacher taught, and he/she would be proud of himself/herself.
- e. Chinese language studying was a necessary and additional homework for children. They needed to learn to read and write in order to grasp the language. Chinese practice occupies a lot of Chinese children's after school time.
- f. Parents tried to encourage their children to develop a talent in a particular area. Some hired tutors to have their children learn painting, piano, violin

or playing chess, etc. Some had their children attend after school learning groups for swimming, gymnastics, skating, and Kong Fu courses.

High value in education

Chinese parents always believe their children can do well in school because the Chinese culture respects and values education. In China, scholars are always respected by the whole society.

When asked:

ME: *What is the most important thing regarding raising a child?*

Most parents replied,

P: *Give them the best education.*

Case 1

Hui's mother said: *In the Chinese society, there is an invisible caste with scholars on top, politicians second, workers third, farmers last... education is very important to us in our society. The situation in Quebec is the same as in China. It will be even hard for us to find a job since we are foreigners, and opportunity is limited for us. In my opinion, I do not think the Chinese can be a success without education. I will do my best to send my son to the most prestigious university, if only he can study.*

Case 2

Yang's mother said: *When I was in China, people were very impressed by someone who had a Ph.D. It is rare in China, and it has more value to the family than somebody who earns a lot of money. – I myself cannot get a Ph. D. in my life, but I hope my daughter will get one in the future. I think it is easier to get a*

Ph.D. here in Quebec than in China, because there are too many people in China, and the competition there is fierce. However, to have a Ph.D. here does not mean you will certainly get a good job. We are foreigners in this country, and we need to work much harder than the local people in order to get the same treatment in our life, for example, we need to be much better than the Quebecois in order to be hired for a position.

Case 3

Huan's mother told me: Education is the key to the success in the present time. If you want to have a better life or a better future, you must get a good education. When my son and I walk in the street, sometimes we see beggars begging from pedestrians. I tell my son: you see how they live in this society? No money, no esteem, no family, and no one to love them. Why? Because they did not study hard when they were young, because they did not get enough education. If you do not work hard and study hard now, you will learn nothing for life, you will not get a good job, you will not have a good life, you will have no future at all, and you may lead a vagrant life just as those beggars.

Case 4

*Ge's mother told me how they regard education as the most important thing in their family. All three of us in our family are all students. Every night, Ge, her father and I read quietly at home. We enjoy studying and reading, and we seldom watch TV. Whatever Ge likes to read, I buy it for her. For example, I bought the four books of **Harry Potter** right after they arrived in the bookstore near us. She likes them so much that it is the fifth time she reads it now. Since*

both of us are university students, and we do not have a job, of course we are short of money. But we never refuse her anything whenever she wants it for her studies. We bought all kinds of music books for her, according to what her violin teacher asked. We spend more than \$300 each month only for her violin tutor. It is hard to calculate the money and the time we spend on her education. However, we consider it as a worthwhile investment. Just like peasants work in the field, if they do not sow in spring, they receive nothing in autumn. For children, if we miss the time for their education, nothing can it compensate later.

Relationship with the teachers at school

Even though Chinese parents are willing to invest a lot, whatever they have, for their children's education, I found that they were quite unwilling to contact their children's school teacher, which I would consider vital for a child's well being. Why is this the case?

The most important reason, I found to be, the language barrier. Even though some of the Chinese parents attended French classes provided by the government for several months, they found it is hard to use French in everyday life. They still use English to communicate, for example, for going to the bank. or going shopping. To use French to communicate with teachers is a tough task for them. As shown in my interviewees' information, only two of the Chinese parents can manage to communicate in French.

Some of the parents had this to say about the schools:

Case 1

Aimi's mother told us about how she manages to know about her daughter's schooling.

My daughter's preschool teacher spoke a little bit of English, that helped us a lot. Each time, when there was something important for us, she would add a note together with the school notes. However, most of the time, we received only French notes, and we had to ask our daughter again and again. Normally we could not get a clear answer because she was too young to remember what the teacher said.

When my daughter went to primary school, her teacher spoke no English at all! We never communicated! We never called her, and she never called us. We only went to her school once for the parent-teacher meeting. That was so embarrassing and so boring! We understood not a word of French! On the bulletin board besides the blackboard, we saw a lot of red stars besides our daughter's name. This was the only way we guessed she must be OK at school.

I felt very sorry for my daughter that I could not speak French. I admitted this to her, hoped she could forgive me. However, as she grew up, she started to ask me to learn French. But I am too busy to learn. Everyday, after work, (she works in the hospital as a nurse), I am exhausted. I have to go to the market to buy food, I have to cook for them, and I have to clean and wash clothes for the whole family. Moreover, I have two daughters to take care of; the other one is only 3 years old. How can I have time to learn French?

Case 2

William is a seven -year old boy who speaks very good English, because he just moved to Montreal from Toronto with his family. Of course, the whole family feels French is the toughest thing for them. Here is their story about their first parent-teacher meeting:

The first time when I met William's teacher, I was so nervous and I did not know what to say. I guess his teacher was the same. We were standing there, smiling at each other, and did not utter a word. Finally, we asked William to translate for us! Poor William, he was not used to doing this at all! His face was all red, and he seemed disturbed!

After that, we seldom went to the parent-teacher meeting. Whenever there was a school note for us, we would ask William's cousin to translate for us. William's cousin even called the schoolteacher for us, when William was ill last time.

Now I realize that French is very important for us if we are going to live in Quebec. I myself want to learn French, and I encouraged William to learn French too. Actually we could have sent William to an English school, because according to Bill 101, William has attended two years' of English schooling in Ontario, he can go to an English school in Montreal instead of a French one. All of our friends told us this and suggested we send William to an English school. However, since we are determined to stay in Quebec, we wanted him to learn French here. He will become a trilingual, and we will be proud of him!

Case 3

Hui' is considered to be a lucky boy among the group of Chinese parents I talked to, because his parents manage to send him to a public English immersion school. This school is famous not only for its bilingual curriculum, but also because of its advanced art education classes. Also each student learns to play a musical instrument by the time he/she graduates from primary school.

This is what Hui's mother had to say about this school:

This school is supposed to be a very good school. It was really crowded when we went there for registration. It was said that it had specialists for the art courses, that was the reason we moved to this area in order to transfer Hui to this school.

However, after Hui squeezed in, we found out that there were a lot of problems in the school. For example, my son felt uncomfortable in school because teachers spoke both English and French, and my son never learnt English before. Sometimes he failed to answer in English, and his teacher would get upset with him. He felt very bad. At home he had to use Chinese, he did not even have enough time for his French. how could he manage to speak English so quickly? Yes, may be I should not say this school is not good: rather, I should say this school is not suitable for my kid. Our expectations were too high, that is normal for Chinese parents, right? But there is a long distance between reality and dreams. There are few immigrant children in that school, so teachers do not care about the difficulties that immigrant children face.

For the local children, most of them were bilingual before they went to this school, so it is an ideal school for them, and they have no problem to adapt, I guess. But my son comes back from school with sadness written all over his face every day.

He cannot finish the homework that he has to do and when I ask him why he says, he does not understand the teacher. When I asked him why he could not ask the teacher to explain, he said that he was afraid of making a fool of himself because it seemed he was the only one who did not understand in the classroom. So, he got 5 "E"s in his school report last year.

We worried about other things that happened in this school, too. For example, the principal wrote us a letter last year, it said that big kids might bully younger kids in the corridors, in the toilets, and they would not take the responsibility. Why? Their reason was that teachers could not follow the kids everywhere. The student's lockers were often broken into and the stuff inside was stolen, but the school never took any action or gave an explanation.

We are considering moving again. Hui needs to be transferred to another school. we guess. We do not expect him to speak English at this age anymore. and we do not want him to learn to play a musical instrument. He may learn these later. Right now. we simply want him to be happy in school like other kids.

Parent – child relationships

In the normal pattern of psychological and emotional development, the relationship between parents and children changes between the ages of 7 to 10. According to Shi and Allen (1976), the children start to feel a "generation gap" between their parents and them. In the case of new immigrants, they will face this "gap" as well as the impact of two different cultures.

Chinese parents always have dreams for their children. They want their children to get as much education as possible, they want them to behave properly, they worry about the friends their children make at school, and they want their children to obey whatever they are told to do. However, these expectations are not easily implemented. From Table 6 (p.45) we can see, more than 5 of the interviewed parents feel they are not satisfied with their children, and at the same time, they do not know how to help them. Very often, they feel they do not understand their children.

The following interviews with various parents elaborates the struggles faced by parents and it clearly shows the relationship they have with their children:

Case 1

Qing's mother and father were university professors before they immigrated to Canada. Now, his father is trying to do some trade/business with his previous Chinese colleagues, so he flies back to China very often. His mother is studying full time at a university in Montreal, and taking care of him at the same time.

Qing's mother pours all her love and passion on her son. He means everything to her. She takes very good care of him. Even though Qing is a 10-year-old boy, he does not have to do anything at home, except playing and studying.

Qing's mother worries about her son's Chinese. Since they immigrated to Quebec four years ago, Qiang started to love it immediately. His French is so good that you could not tell if he is a Quebecois or not. He enjoys studying at school, and he is his teacher's pet. He lives in the Hochelaga area where there are not so many Chinese people, so, almost all his friends are Quebecois. He loves French and he hates Chinese. His Chinese

writing is very poor even though he is one of the oldest one in the class that I teach on Saturday's at the Chinese Weekend School.

He often tells his mother: *I do not want to study Chinese. I am a Canadian now, speaking French and English is enough for me to live here, why do I need to learn Chinese? Moreover, Chinese is so difficult and it is complicated to learn!*

His mother tells him again and again that knowing the Chinese language is very important for a Chinese person. She says to him:

China is a big country with one fourth of the world's population, if you are born as a Chinese and do not understand the language that one fourth of the people use, you will regret it when you grow up. Look at your daddy now, he is doing business with Chinese people, if he does not understand Chinese, how can he manage? You must learn Chinese, it is your duty, and it is your obligation!

However, every time Qing comes to the Chinese weekend school, his mother has to persuade him for a long time, and he comes to school really reluctantly. After Chinese school, Qing normally gets a reward from his mother, a toy he likes, going to McDonald's, or going for a movie. His mother has tried to use every tactic to get him to come for his two hours at the Chinese school, but to no avail! She then decided to ask me, as his teacher to call Qing every Saturday morning. She said:

Teacher Chen, I do not know what to do now. Every time when we talk about Chinese lessons, we have a big fight. He hurts me sometimes. I am exhausted taking care of him and studying at the same time. His father stays in China for 5 months every year. I promised him I would help Qing learn Chinese. What can I do? Could you please call Qing and ask him to go to the Chinese school? I used all my tricks and no matter what I

say now, he will not agree with me. He listens only to you, and he knows if he promises you, he has to go.

Qing is a smart and lovely boy and he is doing not too badly in my class. I have tried my best to spark his interest in Chinese learning, and I encourage him every time he raises his hand. However, even though I have tried to call him several times before going to Chinese school, he does not show up sometimes. I too, like his mother, wish that Qing will change some day and I hope he will love our language and culture in the future.

Case 2

Aimi's mother told me the story of her daughter's birthday last year.

It was last June. Two weeks before her birthday, she talked to me seriously and she said that she wanted to invite some friends in her class to our home to have a birthday party. I was very hesitant because I did not speak French at all. Moreover, I did not cook Western food. How could I communicate with her friends and their parents? How could I host or organize the party? I tried my best not to hurt her and carefully suggested that she might invite some of her Chinese friends from the Chinese weekend school. She refused directly. She insisted that she wanted to invite her Quebecois friends, and I, in order to avoid trouble and embarrassment, insisted that she invite her Chinese friends. During the following week, she did not want to talk much and she looked very sad. I felt sorry and I talked to her father about the situation. However, he was writing his thesis for his Ph.D. and of course he did not have time to solve the problem. Moreover, he does not speak French at all, how can I expect him to help? Me, I rushed everyday from home to work, took care of everything in the house, how much time did I have to pay attention to my daughter's

birthday party? When her birthday came finally, we discussed it and got an instant solution. It turned out that we invited nobody for her birthday; we went to the park "La Ronde" instead. Even though we had fun together as a family, I felt something missing for my daughter's birthday. I regretted it all the time.

Maybe next birthday, I will encourage her to invite her Quebecois friends. There is always a solution, right? I can invite some friends who speak French to help, for example, would you please come to help me? And, why do I need to cook Western food? Her friends may be happy to change their routine and try some delicious Chinese food!

Case 3

Hui's mother looked sad when she told me about the family changing after immigrating to Canada.

We led a happy life in a central province of China before we came to Canada. Both of us had very good jobs, and we bought a big apartment in the city. My mother lived close to us, and she took care of Hui when he was a baby. We had a lady who lived with us and she took care of the housework. Life was quite relaxed, and my husband and I were deeply in love. We went traveling every year, and I bought whatever I wanted to buy, fashion, seafood, nice furniture, etc.

Life has changed dramatically since we moved here. Suddenly, both of us did not work anymore, - it was very hard for us to find a job here. We went to university again in order to gain a degree here, because we thought this might help us in finding a job afterwards. However, nearly four years have passed, neither of us works still. In

order to survive, we kept studying and applying for loans and bursaries from the government.

Then we had our second son, and we became extremely busy just studying and taking care of our two sons. My husband has grown silent and we did not have time to communicate. His temper gets worse as our financial situation becomes worse!

As you know, Hui's grades are not good in school. We scold him very often, and sometimes we punish him. He is a naughty boy, and he become more and more stubborn and cold towards us. Once, his father lost his patience and hit him on his back. He did not cry, instead, he picked up the phone and tried to dial 911. – What a surprise! We never thought he would do this! He told us that his teacher and classmates told him to do so. He said, "Nobody should hit a child, daddy is a very bad daddy! If you ever dare to hit me again, I will call the police again!"

What a shock that was for us! My husband and I discussed the situation that night. We came to a conclusion: this society is no suitable for us. However, our life here has to continue because we cannot go back to China with empty hands. Moreover, there is no place for us in China anymore.

These were some of the very frank and personal interviews that I had with different Chinese parents about life for them in their new homeland and how they had to cope. Mainly, I found that the expectations from Chinese parents are very high, and newly arrived Chinese parents are encountering cultural discomforts as well we financial problems which may interfere their children's education. The rich data that I gathered convinced me even further of the relevance and importance of the subject matter that I had undertaken to discuss in my thesis study.

Interviews with Quebec teachers: Summaries and examples

In order for me to examine one of my research questions: to discuss with teachers about Chinese children's academic and social achievements, I conducted interviews with four teachers. I first highlight their characteristics in Table seven, and then summarize my interviews with them.

Table 7

Main characteristics of the interviewed Quebec teachers

Name	Lise	Nancy	Linda	Rosanne
Gender	Female	Female	Female	Female
Estimated age	45	30	36	50
Years of teaching	13	8	13	28
Grades	Grade 1	Preschool	Grade 1	Grade 2
Type of class	Regular	Classe d'accueil	Regular and Classe d'accueil	Regular
Language ability	French	French, English	French, English	French

As shown in the above chart, the teachers I interviewed are all female from public primary schools in Montreal. They range in estimated age from 30 to 50 and their years spent teaching have been very fruitful and rich. For example, Rosanne has more than 28 years of teaching experience in the regular section of a primary school. On the other hand, Nancy, being the youngest, is in charge of the Classe d'accueil. We can also note that the two younger teachers: Nancy and Linda are bilingual, they are also in charge of the Classes d'accueil, whereas the older teachers, Lise and Rosanne are monolingual.

In the following paragraphs, I have outlined the summaries of the interviews that I had with the four teachers: Nancy, Linda, Lise and Rossane.

Interview with Lise

Lise was my son's teacher when he finished his welcome class. She is a hard working teacher, quite strict with her students. I noticed her students are more disciplined, and during the first two or three weeks of the school, her voice is always hoarse. She led me to the gym because it is quiet and no class was on there.

ME: *Could you tell me something about your background?*

L: *Sure. I have been teaching in the primary school for 13 years. I was teaching in another school 5 years ago, and I changed to this school because I moved closer to this school. This is a nice school, which is famous for its management and organization. Teachers are selected and parents want to send their children to this school.*

ME: *Do you teach immigrants in this school?*

L: *Yes. I had the experience of teaching immigrants, though there are not so many in my class now. For example, this year, I have a boy who speaks Arabic, a boy who speaks Chinese and two girls who speak Spanish. You ask me about my experience with Chinese students? Yes, I had some Chinese students in recent years, they are new to me, and I am learning how to teach them.*

ME: *What do you think about the Chinese students in your class? What is your opinion about their performance and language ability?*

L: *Chinese students normally work harder than other students in my class. They listen to me carefully in the classroom, and seldom make trouble. They respect me and obey me, and they are shy to speak loud in front of the classroom. They can*

catch up with their classmates, and their scores are not bad. They are normally good students.

ME: *How about the language ability of Chinese students?*

L: *Their language? Of course, they would have problems when they first come to my classroom. Even though they have finished their “classe d'accueil”, there are still barriers. For example, when I use some everyday sentences and make a joke, the Quebecois students have no problem in understanding and burst out laughing. However, some Chinese students would be at a loss as to what I am talking about. This situation does not last long. As time goes by, when they go to Grade three or Grade four, they are almost the same as their Quebecois counterparts in French. The language barriers for Chinese students do not interfere with their learning ability. Their understanding is amazing. Of course sometimes when I speak to them, their response is slow. That is because they take their time to think and organize the sentences. I guess the Chinese grammar and sentence order are not the same as in French. So, I give them time. I let them think over and talk to me. As long as I am patient with them, they learn fast.*

I went on to ask her if she saw any difference regarding the academic achievements between the Chinese and other Quebec students in the class, to which she replied:

L: *The mathematical ability of my students in class is far more advanced. I have noticed. They are good at logic. Chinese parents normally teach them*

mathematics at home so I never have to worry about their mathematics in my class.

The only difficulty or disadvantage for the Chinese students is the language barrier. In order to help them, I give them more time to think before they make a speech, and I speak to them slowly, and listen to them carefully.

ME: *What do you think of the involvement of the Chinese parents in school? Do you communicate well?*

L: *It seems to me that Chinese parents are shy. The majority of them speak English. I do not speak English, you know. I do not meet them often. Normally, when we meet, I will ask the student to translate for his parents and me too. If it is necessary, I can call the Montreal School Board to send somebody to translate for me, but I seldom do this. The Chinese parents used to ask me to be strict with their children. They encourage their children to obey the teacher and avoid trouble at school. Just as they tell their children, the Chinese parents do not make trouble in their life, and they are seldom interested in school affairs. For them, the only important thing is their children's performance at school.*

ME: *What are your expectations of the Chinese children in your classroom?*

L: *I do not have any particular expectation from my Chinese students. In my class, I try to treat every student the same. I expect them all to form good study habits, to make certain progress everyday, to learn to co-operate with others and play happily together.*

My interview with Lise continued and I asked her how exactly she defined a child who is successful in school? I also went on to ask her under what criteria a child who failed would come? Lise had this to say:

L: All children are successful at school, I think. No child has failed in my class, and I have been teaching for 13 years. They are all good, they can understand if you give them enough time. If a child learnt nothing in your class, that means he failed, but as you know that is not possible, a child always learns something and that is what I call success. And let me tell you, no Chinese child has ever gone away without learning.

This next question ended my interview with Lise:

ME: Do you know a little bit about Chinese culture?

L: Speaking about Chinese culture, frankly, I do not know too much. We did not have so many Chinese immigrants. It is new to me and I have to learn from my students. I have to read more books. The only thing I am sure is that culture is totally different from ours. Am I right?

I agree with her and we both laugh as I thank her for having taken the time to answer my questions frankly and without bias.

Interview with Nancy

Nancy was my son's Welcome Class teacher when he was in preschool. I called her for help and told her about my project. She invited me immediately: "Come to my classroom tomorrow at 11:30am when the students are away for lunch, and I will see what can I do for you!" So, we started a talk in her classroom, after she had showed me the photos of her new students on the wall.

ME: *Could you tell me about yourself?*

N: *Well, since I graduated from university eight years ago, I have worked as a teacher in the classe d'accueil. I find that I have a great chance of meeting all kinds of immigrant children. I like my job, and I love to stay with children! They are my angels and inspiration. Pierre and I are working hard in order to have our own baby, however, we had a miscarriage six months ago. We felt very sorry about that.*

ME: *Could you tell me more about your experience in teaching a classe d'accueil?*

N: *To teach a "welcome class" is very interesting. I meet a lot of children from different countries and I have a great opportunity to learn from different cultures. Children come to my class speaking different languages, they dress differently, and they eat different meals and follow different customs. My classroom looks like a small United Nations. I know how to say "how are you'" in 12 different languages. In Chinese it is "Ni Hao'", right?*

Nancy continued:

To teach a “welcome class” is also a tough job because I have to be very careful. My students are fragile and helpless before they understand French. I have to be very careful so as not to hurt them or scare them. They watch whatever I do in the classroom, and they understand by watching. If I can build up a trust between them and myself during the first week, things go smoothly afterwards. If not, I have to work three times harder in order to improve the situation. For example, a Chinese girl came to my class more than one month late last semester. When she arrived, we were preparing the Halloween Party. I still remember the second day after she arrived. I asked her to assist me to take some material out of a closet in the back of the classroom. Before I was aware of what happened, she let out a cry and ran out of the classroom. Then I realized that the skeleton in the closet must have scared her. I ran out after her, and saw that she had hid herself inside the toilet and was sobbing. I tried to hold her inside my arms and comfort her, but that made the situation even worse! The whole class ran out and followed me into the toilet, what a mess! It was quite a situation until another teacher called a grade three Chinese girl in and she explained to my little scared girl what we were doing, it was only then that she began to calm down.

I couldn't help but smile when I thought about the situation. we continued talking and I asked Nancy:

ME: *You must have learnt a lot about Chinese culture through your teaching.*

N: *Frankly speaking, I did not know a lot about Chinese culture. But we have more and more Chinese children coming and, they help me understand more. Do you remember the activity "Bring your homeland to school" last year? Everyone was asked to bring something famous and interesting from his/her homeland and explain it to his classmates. Your son brought a photo of the Great Wall and a book introducing China. I put the photo on the wall and I read the book to my students. From the book, I started to know China. I was attracted by its amazing culture and its beautiful landscape. From that time on, I am interested in talking with Chinese parents about their homeland, and I wish someday I could visit your country and climb on the Great Wall by myself.*

Her enthusiasm made me smile. She has been very kind and frank to me since the first time we met. She has a talent in communicating with all kinds of parents, I guess. So, I could not help in asking her:

Me: *You must have a very good relationship with Chinese parents'*

N: *Speaking about Chinese parents, they are really nice people. They speak good English and they are very polite. They bring me all kinds of small gifts from China. Look at those masks on the wall, they are types of facial make-up from the Beijing Opera, one of my students' mother gave it to me last month after she came back from Beijing. I love them! They are generous to the people, and they are strict with themselves. They are strict with their children because they hold high expectation of them. They want their children to learn everything at school, listen*

carefully to what the teacher says. They worry if their children can't catch up with their classmates. When they come to me, normally they will ask, "Does my child behave well at school?" or "Does he/she trouble you in the class?" "Is he/she progressing?" They seldom ask how does the school system work, what kinds of strategies we use on immigrant children, and how do we choose the curriculum, as some other parents do.

ME: *Do you notice any difference regarding the academic achievements between the Chinese children and other Quebec children in your classroom?*

N: *Chinese children are easy to teach. I notice that they concentrate more than other children in my class. They listen carefully to what I say, and they follow my instructions to practice. I do not see any disadvantage for Chinese children, and there is no barrier for them to study the French language. Of course, at first they are shy and not so active in talking in the classroom. However, after a certain period of integration, they play and talk naturally. Their advantage is they are diligent. Chinese parents pay great attention to their children's education, this helps too.*

ME: *What are your expectations of the Chinese children?*

N: *I hope the Chinese children enjoy their second homeland in Montreal. I hope they can be as happy as the local children. I hope they can integrate into our culture as well as keep their home culture. When they grow up, they will become a bridge between the East and the West. They will become a useful person for our society, for this world.*

ME: *What are your criteria for a child who succeeds or fails?*

N: *What are my criteria for success? To me, after one year's "welcome class", if a child understands basically everyday French, and he/she can respond accordingly in French, that means he/she has succeeded, and I have succeeded at the same time. Some children may repeat one year or half a year's "welcome class", because they are really slow learners. That is not a failure to me. Children have different ways of learning, right? However, Chinese children seldom repeat the class in my case.*

Our conversation was interrupted by the returning students. They rushed in and everybody wanted to tell Nancy something about what happened during the lunch time. A girl came over and complained that her finger was injured by hot soup. Nancy kissed her finger gently and hugged her tightly, then she asked the girl: "How do you feel now?" The girl said, "Better!" and flew away with a content smile. Nancy took her time listening to her students one by one, and introduced me to them. What a patient teacher! No wonder my son liked her so much!

When she kissed me to say goodbye, she added: "Call me if you need any other information! Please kiss your son for me!"

Interview with Linda

Linda is a Welcome class teacher who I worked with. She invited me to her classroom while her students were out for their physical education. Her classroom was decorated by flowers and insects, with a very relax and bright atmosphere. I started with my routine questions.

ME: *Could you tell me something about you and your career?*

L: *I have been teaching at the primary level for 13 years. Sometimes I teach a "welcome class", sometimes I teach a regular grade 1 class. I stay with young children all the time, and I like it.*

Remember the Strike of the teachers in Montreal last November? They are saying that teachers are not full time workers, and should not be paid 8 hours a day.

That is nonsense! We work very hard. The time we are not in the classroom does not mean we are not working. How much material we have to prepare? How much do we have to learn before we go to the classroom? How much time we spend discussing our pedagogical methods? They just do not understand!

Sorry to talk to you about this. What I want to say is to be a teacher is not an easy career. The Montreal School Board is ever present surveying you, the headmaster is there controlling you, and the parents are there inspecting you through their children! We are working under pressure, don't you think so?

I was able to sympathize with her because in China, teachers are considered as full time workers. Their time in the classroom consists of many hours' of preparations out of classroom.

She continued:

L: *Teachers are lucky in China! Anyway, let us get to what you want. Chinese children? Yes, I have some in my class this year. I do not understand too much about their culture. The Chinese language is very difficult, right? I remember*

when my mother wanted to express something difficult, she would say it is as hard as Chinese! I am just joking!

ME: *Do Chinese children have difficulties in your class?*

L: *Yes, Chinese students have some difficulties in learning French. They are slower than European students who speak Spanish or Italian. They are shy to practice in a public place and afraid of making mistakes. They care too much if they are correct or not, that is their disadvantage in learning a language. They think too much before they open their mouth, and that is not good. They like to stay together and speak Chinese and that is harmful for their French learning. I have to separate them in different corners in the classroom so that they cannot talk in Chinese in my class. However, during the break time, they will stay and chat in the corridor! That gives me a headache!*

ME: *Do you think they have some advantages in learning?*

L: *Yes. They work hard, and normally, they can catch up with their classmates. They are quiet and do not make trouble in my class. They listen to me when I ask for their attention. I like that.*

ME: *How do you think of Chinese parents? Do you have any contact with them at all?*

L: *Chinese parents seldom give me trouble. I seldom contact them because they are too shy to call me or meet me. When I talk to them, sometimes they do not even look at me just like their kids. I guess there is a cultural gap between us. They do not show up even during the parent-teacher meetings. Since they are not*

so active in communicating with me, it is hard for me to keep in touch with them all the time.

I found that Linda wanted me to explain some of the things concerning Chinese culture, so I volunteered some information. I told her that in Chinese culture, we avoid direct eye-to-eye contact in order to show our respect. That is a big difference with the culture here in Canada. I then continued with my questioning:

ME: *Could you tell me about the criteria you employ to gauge a child's success?*

L: *Sure. Here is a school report that we deliver to parents at the end of each term (see Appendix 6). It represents our criteria for a student's success at school. I am not the one who makes those criteria; it is the school board who made it.*

Linda explained to me that there were different levels: A, B, C, D, and E, to evaluate children. A represents 90 to 100 points, which means a student has made very good progress. B represents 80 to 89 points, which means a student made good progress in his/her studies; C represents 70 to 79 points, which means a student made some progress in his/her studies; D represents 60 to 69 points, which means a student had some difficulty in his/her studies; and E represents 50 to 59 points, which means a student has a lot of difficulty in his/her studies.

Interview with Rossane

Rossane is the director of the Grade one and Grade two group (altogether six classes). She is also my son's teacher in Grade two. She is a very active and open person. In her office, I started the interview with the usual question:

ME: *Could you please tell me something about yourself?*

R: *Yes. I am the oldest teacher in this school, as you may have noticed. I have been teaching for almost 30 years. That is quite a long time, ah? Can you imagine I taught some of my students' whole family! For example, I taught one of my students' mommy and daddy, I taught his uncle and auntie! I taught his sister two years ago. Now I am teaching him. Is it amazing? Everyone in his family calls me "professeur". I do not want to retire; to stay with children makes me feel young.*

ME: *Do you have some Chinese immigrant children in your classroom?*

R: *Chinese students have come to my class only in recent years. When I was young, there were no Chinese students at all. However, there were immigrants at that time too. They were Italians, Jewish people and Arabs. I do not know much of Chinese culture; they are from very far away, right? Poor kids! They must miss their homeland!*

I couldn't help but say that it was very kind of her to say so. I continued my questioning:

ME: *What do you think of the Chinese children's performance and language ability in school?*

R: *It is hard for them to learn French! But they learn fast! It is amazing to watch them speak French. They are great learners! I often think of learning another language, but it never happened to me. Even English is so hard for me; imagine if I have to learn Chinese! I will die!*

Chinese children are good at learning French. They are smart children. I do not see much of a barrier for them. I understand them when they talk to me, but I normally ask them to speak in my ears. I am used to hugging all the children in my class, and I give them kisses on the cheek when I want to encourage them. However, I noticed this does not work with Chinese children. They are reluctant and try to escape from my arms when I hug them, and their face turns red when I kiss them. I realized it is because of their culture, they are not used to this. OK. I respect them. If they do not want it, I do not do it. I just praise them orally.

ME: *What do you think of the involvement of the Chinese parents in school? Do you communicate well? What are your expectations from them?*

R: *I seldom contact Chinese parents. I guess it is my fault. I do not speak English, and it is hard for me to communicate with them. I am too busy to call them or visit them, and I can hardly find somebody who can help me in translation. Yes, I can call for translators from the Montreal School Board if I wanted to, but the procedure is complicated. I called only once for my parent-teacher meeting. I prepared for a long time for the five Chinese parents to come, but there were only two of them who showed up at that time. I was a little bit disappointed, however. I should not blame them. They are good parents, and they pay great attention to their children's studies, that is enough for me.*

ME: *What are your expectations of the Chinese children in your classroom?*

R: *I hope they could be braver in answering my questions and challenging me in my classroom. I wish they could be more open and accept the norms of the Western society. I wish they could integrate into the school as soon as possible. –*

It is good for them in the long run you know. If they wish to find a job or a place in this society in the future, they need to give up their home culture and learn from this one. They need to function just as others in this society.

ME: *How do you define a child who is successful in school? What are the criteria for a child who fails?*

R: *Do you need the criteria for students' evaluation? I have a school report here; you may take it if you want. It is prescribed by the "Commission Scolaire De Montreal", and all the public primary schools in Montreal have the same version. We use it to display a student's performance at school and we hand it to parents. Personally, at the present time I think it is a good way to evaluate the students at our school.*

Rosanne is a busy director, she had to answer phone calls even during the interview. However, the interview ended well. I thanked Rosanne for her help and left.

These interviews that I conducted with the teachers, gave me a very clear insight into another side of immigrant children: their lives in Quebec school and their teachers' expectations for them. From the above dialogue, we can see that the teachers perceive Chinese children as diligent, quiet, and obeisant. They normally do not make troubles at school and they get less of the teachers' attention. At the same time, I found that teachers are not very familiar with Chinese culture, thus, it is hard for them to be aware of the internal conflict that the Chinese children encounter.

Interviews with Chinese children: Summaries and examples

There were ten Chinese children from the Chinese weekend school who participated in my research study. I first show the main characteristics of the ten children in Chart Eight and the main concerns of them in Chart Nine. In the paragraphs that follow, I have summarized the main points from the interviews with the ten children.

Table 8

Main characteristics of the interviewed Chinese children

Ages	From 7 to 10	
Place of birth	The different provinces of the People's Republic of China.	
Gender	5 boys	5 girls
Schools	9 in French public schools	1 in an English immersion public school
Language at home	9 speak Mandarin	1 speaks Cantonese
Years in Quebec	8 arrived 3 to 4 years ago	2 arrived less than 2 years ago

Table 9

Main concerns of Chinese children

Questions	Yes	Somewhat (sometimes)	No
1. Do you like the school?	7	2	1
2. Do you like learning French?	7	3	-
3. Do you like the teacher?	5	3	2
4. Do you like to answer questions in class?	2	7	1
5. Do you ask questions in class?	-	5	5
6. Do you feel comfortable in the class?	8	2	-
7. Does your teacher like you?	4	4	2
8. Does your teacher understand you when you speak?	9	1	-
9. Do your classmates like you?	4	6	-

10. Do you have good friends in school?	4	5	1
11. Do children tease you because you look different?	2	3	5
12. Do children call you names?	-	3	7
13. Do you speak French with your Chinese friends?	5	5	-
14. Do you tell your parents what happened in school?	5	3	2
15. Do your parents complain about your report card?	5	3	2
18. Do your parents check your homework?	8	2	-
19. Do your parents speak French?	2	4	4
20. Do your parents meet your teachers?	1	5	4
21. Do you go to a Chinese cultural center?	6	4	-
22. Do you learn Chinese art?	3	4	3
23. Do you take part in sports?	-	8	2
24. Do you watch TV every evening?	4	5	1
25. Do you often go to local libraries?	3	7	-
26. Do you attend local community activities?	2	4	4

The points that I discuss in the following paragraphs mainly outline the problems faced by the Chinese immigrant children whom I interviewed. They are lonely, they feel pressure from their parents and they feel uncomfortably different at school.

First, they are very lonely and they long to have friends. This feeling is not as strong when they are in school, because there are a lot of activities and they have to cope with and they are busy studying too. The loneliness becomes distinct when they go back home. After finishing their homework, they want to play with somebody. However, since most of the new immigrants from Mainland China have only one child (due to the One-Child Policy in P.R.C.), it is hard for them to find a child of the same age to play with. Chinese children normally live far away from each other; Quebecois friends seldom visit a Chinese home, and vice versa. As for the parents, they are often too busy to play with their children moreover, the "generation gap" prevents them from playing together. It is also difficult for the parents to arrange a time to go for sports with their children. So, for

most of them, television and computer games become their most intimate friends, and they spend a lot of time with them.

Second, Chinese children feel it is hard to satisfy their parents. It seems that no matter how good the children think themselves to be, their parents keep telling them, "There is always room for improvement." Chinese parents want their children to do well, and be the best. They like to compare their children's academic achievement with some models among the Chinese community- with some children who have achieved a higher score, and some outstanding children whose performance had been published in the newspaper. They seldom encourage their children by saying: "Very good!" "I am proud of you!" "You are the best!" Since modesty is considered a virtue in Chinese culture. Chinese parents tend to think "modesty brings progress while pride will bring about regression". They never allow their children to be too proud of themselves.

Third, Chinese children feel that they are different when compared to other children at school and thus they feel inferior because they are different. Some of them are ashamed of their parents who do not speak French, or speak with a heavy accent. They want to dress in the same fashion and play the latest games just like the other children at school. If they take lunch to eat at school, they prefer Western food such as Sandwiches, Hot Dogs, or Pizza rather than Chinese fried rice or Chinese dumplings. In school, they want to be assimilated as much as possible: they want to eliminate the differences as much as possible.

The three points mentioned in the preceding paragraphs were gleaned from the interviews that I had with the ten Chinese children. The generalizations that I made are

taken from the results of the questions I asked each child (Table nine on page 78 shows their responses).

The paragraphs that follow are examples taken from the interviews I had with the children. These examples elaborate the three main ‘problems’ faced by Chinese immigrant children:

Loneliness

The Chinese children I interviewed often complain that they do not have friends to play with them after school.

Case 1

Jie is a ten-year-old girl in my Chinese class and her Chinese reading and writing scores are higher than the other children. However, I noticed that she does not like other kids who normally eagerly want to show me their knowledge. She hardly raises her hand when I ask questions, even though she knows the answers. She is so quiet that you hardly notice her in the classroom.

When I asked her why she does not want to raise her hand when she actually knows the answer, she told me about her life:

I am used to that. I enjoy staying alone and playing with myself. I had a lot of friends to play with when we were in China; they are my cousins and our neighbors' children. I miss them very, very much. Four years ago, we came to Canada, and I never made a good friend as I had in China. Mom and Daddy opened a grocery store down stairs, and they are too busy to play with me. They want me to study so I stay home alone all the time. Daddy bought me some Chinese learning CDs that I can play

with my computer. These CDs are very good teachers and play partners for me. They teach me the right pronunciation, how to write correctly, how to sing, and they play Chinese games with me. I like them very much and I asked Daddy to buy me more CDs. Now I have all kinds of CDs on my bookshelf. They teach me English, French, mathematics, they teach me how to type, and they play all kinds of games with me. I do not feel lonely anymore. Every day, I rush home and finish my homework, and then I stay with my favorite CDs. I forget everything when I play with them. Sometimes I do not have time to eat and drink, and I play till bedtime. Daddy bought me a new computer on my birthday, and I am very happy!

Case 2

Jing's parents divorced after they arrived in Montreal. Jing stayed with her mother. Jing's father went to the United States and they lost contact with him. Jing's mother did not know where to find her husband and where to get the child support fee for Jing. So, after studying at university, she went to China town to wash dishes on weekends in order to get more money.

Jing told me her story when I met her in a restaurant in China town. She was sitting in a corner, with a book in her hand, watching the clients of the restaurant coming in and going out.

What am I doing here? I am having fun watching people. I see happy kids coming here with their parents; I see quarrelling couples, who can hardly finish their meal together. Some people look poor, but they give generous tips, some people look rich, but they give small tips, or even leave without tipping. There are a lot of things to watch and learn while I am hiding myself here, pretending to read a book, right?

My Mom works in the kitchen inside on Saturdays and Sundays. Sometimes Mom sends me to a friend's home, but her friend is reluctant to take care of me for 8 hours a day. So, most of the time, I come with Mom for work here. The owner of the restaurant is very kind to us, since he knew that my Daddy is far away and nobody takes care of me, he allows me to sit in his restaurant to read. On Saturdays, I go to the Chinese school, which is not too far from here, for the whole day, and come back for a bowl of noodles that Mom buys for me in the restaurant. On Sundays, I can go to the bookstore just across the street. The owner of the bookstore is a nice lady. She told me that I could stay in her store as long as I want, and I do not have to buy a book. How did I get to know her? Well, she was a client of this restaurant and she saw me many times. Once she noticed my Mom rushed out of the kitchen and bought me a bowl of noodles. She came over and talked to my Mom, and she invited me to go to her bookstore to read. There are so many Chinese books in her store, and there are a lot of books for children! I love to stay in her store! My Mom told me that I am very lucky to have such a good chance to read. I read a lot of new books, - the new books that just arrive in Montreal from China; I like the smell of printers ink on the new books. I think I am luckier than other Chinese children!

Case 3

Huan is a 7 year-old Chinese boy. Of course he likes to play with Chinese boys. He has two best friends whom he met when he and his parents just arrived in Montreal. They lived in an "Immigrants' Home" at that time, a Chinese immigrants welcome center for landed Chinese immigrants to live temporarily. His two friends, Hui and Bei, they lived there too, with their parents. Three boys of the same age, they

naturally played together while their parents were busy searching for apartments.

How happy those days were! They did not have school to go to, and they did not have homework to do. They had just arrived, a brand new world, and their parents were busy trying to cope, thus they did not have time to restrict them! They played gun games, they play hide and seek, they played Ping Pong, they played Chinese checkers, and their favorite time was to play in the small park across the street where there was a children's playground, especially looking for insects in the grass! They seldom quarreled; even when they did, they managed to make up right away!

Unfortunately all the fun came to an end, since their parents found apartments in different corners in Montreal, they separated and went to different schools. However, the three families still manage to meet occasionally. They celebrate Chinese New Year, Mid-Moon Festival, and other festivals together. Far away from their motherland, far away from relatives and friends, and also because of the deep friendship of their children, the parents became close friends. Due to the constant demands of their kids, they send them to the same Chinese weekend school and the same class so that they can be together once a week.

All Huan's happiness is made up of playing with his two best friends! How he wishes he could spend every hour after school with them! But no, they are too far away from him, and he has to wait till the weekend. When asked what the happiest thing for him in life is, he replied, without hesitation: *Going to the Chinese school on Saturdays!*

ME: *So you like to learn Chinese very much!* I teased.

H: *Not really. I want to meet my friends there and play with them after!*

In order to meet his friends and play with them afterwards, Huan has to study hard and behave very well during the weekdays. His parents know him and they tell him constantly, *Be good at school. If you get a "Happy Face" everyday this week, we will bring you and your friends to play at McDonald's after the Chinese school, or, Stop TV and go to bed if you still want to meet your friends this weekend!* Whenever Huan hears this kind of warning, he immediately obeys and behaves very well.

ME: *What do you normally play together?*

H: *I don't know. Sometimes we just chat together, tell each other what happened in school. Sometimes we talk about the recent new films from Disney and exchange videocassettes. We also play cards: Pokemon, Digimon, because we like these monster images and sometimes we play Tic-Tac-Toe. Sometimes we talk about a computer game that we just downloaded from inter-net.*

As times went by, they started to forget their Chinese traditional games, the games they played when they arrived in Montreal. They play more games that they have picked up from the French schools they go to, and they tend to be more like Quebecois children. While they chat, they speak more French than Chinese. In McDonald's, I noticed that they chatted in French on one table while their parents chatted in Chinese at another table. A Quebecois lady was watching them, and smiling. She understood them more than their parents!

Pressure from the parents

Almost all the children feel the pressure on them from their parents. As single children in the family, they are expected to be good students in school and good

children at home. Parents take no chances and watch them carefully. In the interviews that I carried out, this is what some of the children had to say:

Case 1

Huan is a good student at school. He always gets a “Happy Face” from school. He told me he is the second best student in his class, but his parents do not believe him. They said: *Look at your school report, you have even a C on it, how can you be the second best? You always tell us you are good just because you want to play with your friend, right?* Huan emphasized that he is the second best in his French class to me. He said: *There is only one girl whose French scores are higher than mine. My mathematic is always the best!*

Besides mathematics, Huan is very good at painting. He won the Second Prize in Montreal’s Chinese children’s painting competition. He told me he had won a\$100 award from the committee of that competition. *Stop boasting!* His father scolded him: *You were not the best one, remember? Even if you were the best, you should keep working hard. If you do not work hard, somebody else will make progress and be better than you!*

His parents ask him to study hard everyday: *You will be the best one if you work hard enough. Do not be satisfied with what you have already achieved. That is nothing compared to the endless knowledge of this world. Work hard and behave well, life is going to reward you more in the future!*

Another example, where a child was under constant pressure from her parents:

Case 2

At school, Jing is quiet and smart and her teachers and classmates like her very much. However, at home, she quarrels very often with her mother about trivial things. Both she and her mother are in despair about this.

Jing told me, Mom does not want me to give my opinion. She says this is her home, and she is the only adult at home, and I must listen to her. I have to obey her for everything, from when to take a shower to what to put on the wall of my bedroom. Moreover, Mom says everything she does is for my benefit; she sacrificed a lot for me to stay in Montreal. If it were not for my education, she would have gone back to China where she had a nice job and where grandpa and grandma are. She very easily becomes sad and upset, and she cries sometimes if I do not listen to her.

For example, she checked my mathematics home work and she said that it is too easy for me. She warned me that my friends in China learned much more than me and I should practice more with the textbooks she brought from China. I explained to her that teachers here taught differently, but she would not listen. She assumes that I have become lazy after coming to Montreal, something that I have learned from my Quebecois friends.

Mom also did not like my religious class. When I told her about the interesting stories from the Bible, she became upset. She said there is no God in this world: everything we do depends on ourselves. "Can you pray and get food? No! I have to work hard in the restaurant to get money to buy food for you! Where is God? God died when we were starving!" She then said, "Never try to pray for your good scores at school! God will not give you a good score if you do not work hard enough.

Depend on yourself and work hard, you will satisfy your Mom as well as feeling happy for yourself!

Case 3

Yang told me that her parents wanted her to do all the translation, for them wherever they go in Montreal.

She said: *Since I started school in Montreal, my parents have asked me to learn French well. They emphasized that they do not speak French at all, so everything would depend on me. I am the only one to speak French at home, and I am their hope and their translator. From going to restaurant to going shopping, they take me with them. I even did my own Summer Camp registration. I buy all the stuff for my family. I answer all the phone calls when I am at home, and I ask for directions when we visit new places. I accompanied Mom to the hospital, and I went to the bank with Daddy. I borrowed books from the library and I called Pizza Hut for a Pizza delivery for dinner.*

At first I was very curious and I was happy for what I did for my parents. But now, I am tired of it. I am fed up of doing this and that for them, and they think it is natural for me to do so, because they sent me to learn French at school. It is a burden for me to be asked to do this and that. Why don't they learn French themselves? They just want me to work hard, but they do not work hard. They often say that they are getting old and are not suited to learn a new language. That is not true!

Feeling different at school

New Chinese immigrants normally cannot afford to send their children to private schools. So, most of the Chinese children are in the public schools in Montreal. Quite often, they have lunch at school, and in the afternoon, some children stay in “Service De Garde” till 6:00 pm to finish their homework and wait for their parents to pick them up. They stay in school for almost the whole day. This leads to the questions: How do they feel about it? What is their situation? How do they go through the process of integration?

This is what some of the children had to say when I interviewed them to ask them about the above -mentioned questions:

Case 1

Qing is 10 years old now, and he remembered very well, what happened when he was sent to the “Welcome Class” about four years ago.

After we settled down in Montreal, my Mom sent me to a “Welcome Class” near our home to learn French. The teacher who received us was a nice lady named Nancy. She spoke both English and French, but not Chinese. I cried and held my Mom tightly and did not want to let her go. However, my Mom managed to leave me and closed the door. I did not understand a word of what Nancy said to me. She took me by the hand and led me to the classroom. I was scared! However, I found that there were two other children who looked like me in the class! I slowly walked towards them and hid myself behind them.

I did not follow the teacher’s lesson because I wanted to pee all morning. I did not dare talk to the Chinese children, because I was not sure if they were Chinese.

There were more than 18 children in my class, and they looked strange and different. Some of them had dark skin, and some of them dressed in long robes. Some had red hair, and some had hundreds of pigtails on their heads. I sat in my seat and worried if my Mom was going to come to the school and get me. I burst into tears when I felt an ache in my belly. The teacher ran to me and asked me a lot of questions. Of course I could not answer her except cry. Finally she seemed to understand and led me to the toilet. What a relief!

In the game playing that followed, I started to get close to the Chinese looking children. I found they spoke the same language like me! How happy I was! Three of us stayed together and started to talk and play. We did not want to listen to the teacher any more!

The teacher noticed us, the small group of Chinese children enjoyed speaking their mother tongue and did not want to communicate with others. She separated us and put us into different groups. We felt sorry, but we tried to communicate with eyes and gesture even though we were away from each other. I felt safer and calm after I talked with my Chinese classmates!

Case 2

Hui told me he did not want his parents to talk when they picked him up in “Service De Garde”, because he was afraid his classmates would laugh at him.

ME: *Did they really laugh at you or is it only your imagination?*

H: *I do not know. I think they will laugh at me. He said: They laughed at me when I brought Chinese food to school. They do not like the smell of Chinese food. I know. I am the only Chinese in my class and I am different. I do not speak the*

correct language; I do not understand them when they talk sometimes. My French is not good, my English is not good either... I speak Chinese at home... I do not want them to laugh at me anymore.

ME: *Chinese is a beautiful language. You are cleverer than them don't you think so? They speak only French and English, but you understand both, moreover, you speak Chinese! You speak one more language than them!*

H: *No, they think I am stupid when I do not understand in the classroom!*

Teachers tease me too. Chinese language is not good. I hate my parents. They do not speak French. They did not speak French to me when I was young.

When I had E's in my school report, my parents get angry. But it is not my fault! They do not speak the right language, why blame me? They deserve it!

Case 3

Jie is a quiet girl at home, and she is also a quiet student in my Chinese class. So when I interviewed her I asked her: how about at French school?

J: *I am the same. Teachers do not pay much attention to me, and they do not care what I am thinking in my mind, as long as I am sitting quietly in the classroom. They only pay attention to those students who are very active and very brilliant, or those who make trouble. Me? I am transparent to them. They like me because I do not cause any trouble to them. They praise me only when they want the classroom to be quiet.*

After teaching me for three years, my physical education teacher never knew my name. When he wants me to do some exercise, he only look at me and says,

"You!" I want to tell him my name is not "you", but I do not want to offend him.

Actually it is good to be transparent in the teachers' eyes. I avoid a lot of embarrassment and trouble. I am not with any group minority related or gang related. I am not dangerous to anybody, and I will not be a target to anybody. The only thing that matters is I do not have a true friend. Nobody cares about me, nobody misses me if I leave here, and I do not have anybody to miss. That is sad.

From the above interviews, I found that Chinese immigrant children are lonely and longing to make more friends in their lives. They also feel strong pressure from their parents' high expectations. At school, they feel different from others because of their appearance, language and culture difference. I now have some very rich data that come from the children themselves, the parents and the teachers. I was able to analyze my research questions using the data that I had gathered. The following and last section of the paper will present some conclusions.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Conclusion

Conclusion

From the previous discussion and my interview summaries, it is clear that the Chinese immigrant children are, indeed, facing many challenges in their immigrant life in Quebec. The discrepancies between the Quebec culture and the Chinese culture, as experienced by young immigrant Chinese students, are discussed in the following section.

Conflict between the Chinese culture at home and the Quebec culture at school

The majority of Chinese parents normally maintain Chinese traditional culture at home. They want to assert their authority, and require their children to be obedient. Chinese children generally do not have freedom of speech and the rights of privacy at home.

However, this is not the case at school. School teaches the children other kinds of values and norms, such as independence, freedom of speech, and the pursuit of their own right to be creative. School teaches children not only to respect but also to question, not only to obey but also to challenge.

These two different worlds can make Chinese children quite puzzled and confused. They may develop a dual personality, growing up with psychological problems or become totally silent and withdrawn. These phenomena may cause serious damage to their future lives and even careers. The need to negotiate their way through these cultural and normative boundaries without the understanding of their parents, put them at risk.

Discrepancies between Chinese parents' high expectation and teachers' generalized expectations

It is obvious that Chinese parents hold very high and clear expectations for their children. They can give detailed figures for their children's future easily, and spend many hours describing their dreams for their children. In order to realize these dreams, they set up step-by-step plans, and try to implement them every day. Even when some parents do not have time to supervise their children, they will pay money to buy books or send their children to weekend schools to enable them to study more.

On the other hand, Quebec schoolteachers seem as if they do not have a definite expectations for the children at school, including for Chinese children. Many teachers lack sufficient information about the Chinese cultural background, and rarely have teachers developed any specific programs for their Chinese students. Chinese children are left free to develop themselves into any personality they want, as other children in their classroom. Teachers are more relaxed than Chinese parents; they are easier for Chinese students to satisfy, when it comes to performance. To students, their teachers are just there to help if they ask for it. Teachers may even hold lower educational expectations for Chinese children, because they know the Chinese children come from a totally different culture and face difficulties in learning the language. For example, they may find out that Chinese children are normally quiet, and sometimes they are slow in answering questions. Some teachers may pay less attention to Chinese children since they know the Chinese parents will push their children at home, and the children will be good in the class anyway.

This discrepancy in expectations between home and school may cause confusion for Chinese children. Strong pressure from their parents to study hard and to excel may cause intense internal conflict when juxtaposed with the generalized or lower expectations from schoolteachers which do not support the parents' hopes that the children will stand out as exceptional achievers. Thus the net effect of the lowered expectations from the school may be to undermine the child's need to please his/her parents. In turn, these discrepancies between home and school may bring open conflict at home between parents and children.

Lack of communication between Chinese parents, Chinese children and school teachers

The lack of communication between Chinese parents and Chinese children, Chinese students and Quebec schoolteachers, Quebec schoolteachers and Chinese parents cause misunderstandings and incongruity in expectations between them.

Chinese parents normally do not have equal one-on-one communication with their children. They try to control their children's lives because they think they have the right to do so according to Confucian philosophy. They cannot bear it if their children challenge them. Scolding and autocratic behavior silences their children's voices at home.

But what about the relationships between Chinese parents and Quebec teachers? Due to the differences in culture and language barriers, Chinese parents seldom take the initiative in communicating with the teachers. Some of them feel embarrassed by their lack of French speaking ability. Some of them are not accustomed to interfering with their children's schooling. Some of them are struggling to survive in a new country, and

just do not have the time or energy to put extra time aside to communicate with school teachers. Furthermore, teachers in Quebec are not very familiar with this ethnic group. They do not appear to want to make the initial contact in case the Chinese parents see them as rude and they fear not being able to communicate due to the language barrier.

Although they meet every day at school, communication between Chinese children and Quebec teachers may be infrequent. First, there are too many students in a classroom, and teachers may have limited time for each of them. Second, Chinese students are normally quiet and shy; they do not make trouble and they are good at avoiding their teachers' attention. Third, there is the ever-present cultural and linguistic gap, particularly for new Chinese immigrant children. Ways need to be found to bridge all these gaps.

Recommendations

Here in Quebec, a culturally unique part of Canada, parents and school –teachers, alike, need to be more aware of the potential conflicts between Chinese traditional cultural values and Quebec culture. If we insist on doing things only in the Chinese way or the Quebec way, we could be inflicting long-term harm on the children. There is an urgent need for further research to find ways to create more coherence in young Chinese students' experience.

Chen (1996), points out that schools should provide immigrant children with some skills to ease them through the culture shock and to improve educational practices in consequence. For this to occur, teacher education needs to pay much more attention to these matters. Specifically, teachers need to read about and to experience what is involved in being a cultural broker. They need to know enough about each child's home

culture to enable them to help the child make the normative, linguistic and cultural transition from home to school and home again. With such training, teachers could better encourage Chinese children to participate in class discussions and oral presentations in class in order to promote more speaking opportunities for them. Ideally, by increasing contact between parents and school, teachers can support parental authority as well as school authority.

Another initiative that could be taken into consideration is an example of what takes place in China, where there is a tradition that each school has one or two days open to the public every term. It is called "Open Day". On this day, all parents and other schoolteachers are invited to visit the school freely, and observe the classroom teaching as well as administrative office at work. They can discuss with teachers about their children's education or even make comments to the school headmaster. Thus, the parents have a clear idea of what their children do at school and what the school teaches them. It makes it easy for the parents to understand the school system so that they can co-operate and follow suit at home.

In England, schools have volunteers to function as a liaison between school and home on a long- term basis. The volunteers speak, both the home language of the student and the school language and they naturally set up a bridge between them. They explain to parents what the school system is all about, and they report the parents' concerns and comments to the schoolteachers. This kind of volunteers work would be ideal in the Quebec situation when dealing with newly arrived immigrant children and their parents.

Another point to consider would be for the Minister of Education or Minister of Immigration, to take on the responsibility of delivering more information to the parents of

school going children. They may give courses or lectures to the parents as well as making information pamphlets to explain how the educational system functions in Quebec and why it functions in such a way. Thus, the parents will have a better understanding about their children's identity confusion and emotional needs, and they can help them better survive in the new environment. They will be aware of the expectations of the Quebec society they presently live in, and allow their children to adapt to the ideas and values of this society. They may allow their children to express themselves more freely, and be encouraged to respect certain freedoms. They may also become more involved in school affairs and share their opinions with their children, with the teachers' and even the whole society's encouragement. By encouraging their children to participate in school and community activities, Chinese parents will be helping their children develop their own life styles and values, combining the Eastern and Western virtues and ideals, and refine their social skills in order to integrate more easily into the Quebec society.

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APPENDIX 1



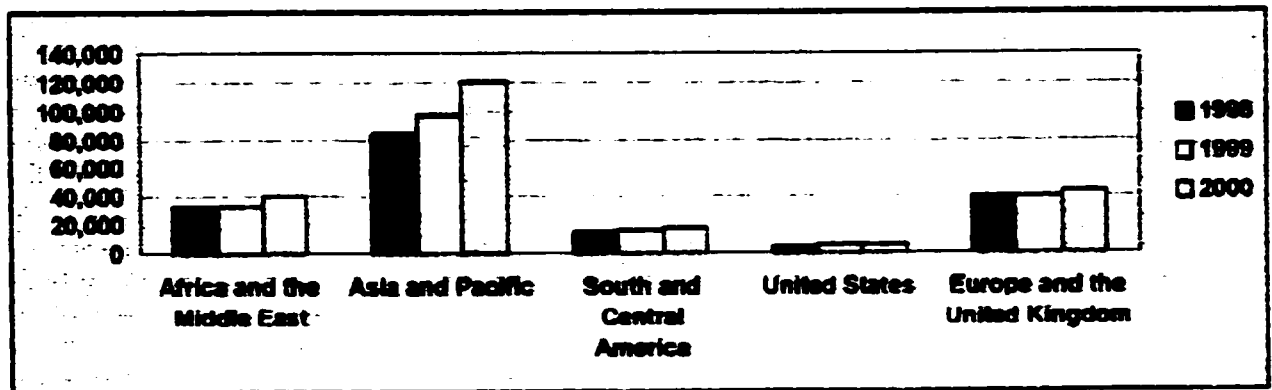
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FACTS and FIGURES 2000

Immigration Overview

IMMIGRATION BY SOURCE AREA AND TOP TEN SOURCE COUNTRIES

Immigration by Source Area



Principal Applicants and Dependants

REGION	1998		1999		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Africa and the Middle East	32,586	18.71	33,486	17.63	40,779	17.95
Asia and Pacific	84,197	48.34	96,429	50.78	120,491	53.03
South and Central America	14,040	8.06	15,223	8.02	16,939	7.46
United States	4,773	2.74	5,528	2.91	5,809	2.56

Europe and the United Kingdom	38,530	22.12	38,930	20.50	42,875	18.87
Not Stated	36	0.02	315	0.17	316	0.14
Total	174,162	100	189,911	100	227,209	100

Immigration by Top Ten Source Countries

Principal Applicants and Dependents

COUNTRY	1998			1999			2000		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank
China, People's Republic of	19,779	11.36	1	29,110	15.33	1	36,718	16.16	1
India	15,370	8.83	2	17,425	9.18	2	26,064	11.47	2
Pakistan	8,091	4.65	4	9,295	4.89	3	14,173	6.24	3
Philippines	8,184	4.70	3	9,170	4.83	4	10,077	4.44	4
Korea, Republic of	4,916	2.82	8	7,215	3.80	5	7,630	3.36	5
Sri Lanka	3,328	1.91	14	4,722	2.49	9	5,832	2.57	6
United States of America	4,773	2.74	9	5,528	2.91	7	5,809	2.56	7
Iran	6,775	3.89	7	5,907	3.11	6	5,606	2.47	8
Yugoslavia	1,172	0.67	40	1,490	0.78	29	4,719	2.08	9
United Kingdom	3,898	2.24	11	4,477	2.36	10	4,648	2.05	10
Russia	4,304	2.47	10	3,774	1.99	12	3,521	1.55	13
Taiwan	7,191	4.13	6	5,464	2.88	8	3,511	1.55	14
Hong Kong	8,087	4.64	5	3,663	1.93	13	2,857	1.26	17
Total for Top Ten only	87,470	50.22		98,313	51.77		121,276	53.38	
Total Other Countries	86,692	49.78		91,598	48.23		105,933	46.62	
Total	174,162	100		189,911	100		227,209	100	

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APPENDIX 2



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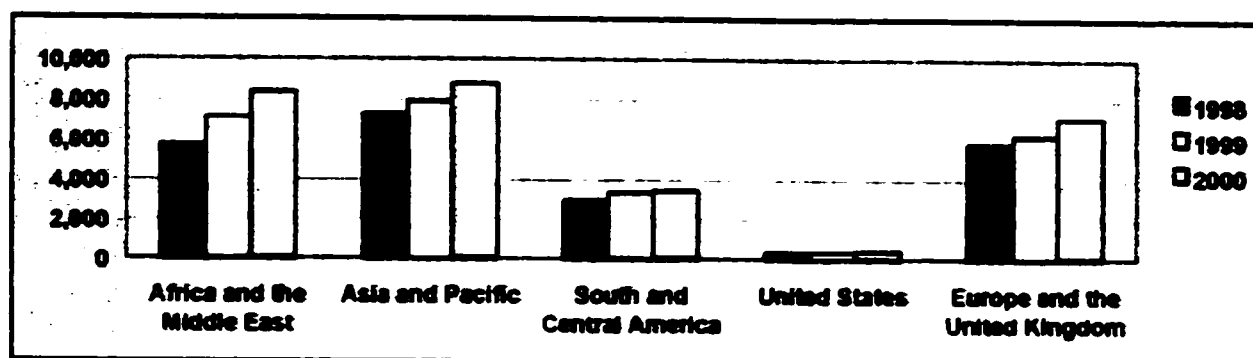
publications

FACTS and FIGURES 2000

Immigration Overview

MONTREAL BY SOURCE AREA AND TOP TEN SOURCE COUNTRIES

Montreal by Source Area



Principal Applicants and Dependants

REGION	1998		1999		2000	
	#	%	#	%	#	%
Africa and the Middle East	5,703	25.88	7,075	28.39	8,346	29.72
Asia and Pacific	7,255	32.92	7,908	31.73	8,781	31.27
South and Central America	2,936	13.32	3,358	13.47	3,419	12.17
United States	332	1.51	347	1.39	412	1.47
Europe and the United Kingdom	5,809	26.36	6,191	24.84	7,083	25.22
Not Stated	4	0.02	46	0.18	44	0.16
Total	22,039	100	24,925	100	28,085	100

Montreal by Top Ten Source Countries

Principal Applicants and Dependants

COUNTRY	1998			1999			2000		
	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank	#	%	Rank
France	2,432	11.03	1	2,704	10.85	1	3,054	10.87	1
China, People's Republic of	1,374	6.23	3	1,713	6.87	2	2,671	9.51	2
Algeria	1,426	6.47	2	1,576	6.32	3	1,995	7.10	3
Morocco	778	3.53	7	1,251	5.02	4	1,868	6.65	4
Haiti	1,006	4.56	4	1,165	4.67	5	1,210	4.31	5
Sri Lanka	442	2.01	17	786	3.15	10	1,189	4.23	6
India	896	4.07	5	909	3.65	8	1,166	4.15	7
Romania	687	3.12	9	985	3.95	6	1,140	4.06	8
Pakistan	531	2.41	13	822	3.30	9	809	2.88	9
Lebanon	466	2.11	16	630	2.53	11	698	2.49	10
Korea, Republic of	685	3.11	10	953	3.82	7	676	2.41	11
Taiwan	710	3.22	8	626	2.51	12	329	1.17	19
Hong Kong	861	3.91	6	315	1.26	21	268	0.95	25
Total for Top Ten only	10,855	49.25		12,864	51.61		15,800	56.26	
Total Other Countries	11,184	50.75		12,061	48.39		12,285	43.74	
Total	22,039	100		24,925	100		28,085	100	
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APPENDIX 3

Interview Guide Questions for Parents

Name of parent _____ Child's age _____ Grade _____ Gender _____

1. Why did you immigrate to Canada?

2. What's your expectation for your child?

3. Are you satisfied with your child's achievements? What do you wish regarding to your child's behavior in school and at home? What do you think of your child's education here?

4. What do you think of your role as parents? What is most important in regard to raising children? What has changed since you immigrate here?

5. Do you assist in your child's schooling? How? Do you ask your child to do extra work at home? What kind of work? Any conflict or difficulty?

6. Do you let your child watch TV? What kind of programs do they normally watch? How long do you let her/him watch? Why?

7. Do you think you understand your child? Do you think she/he is happy at school? Do you think she/he is happy at home? Why?

8. How do you spend Saturdays with your child? How about Sundays?

9. What lessons did you learn and what are your suggestions to other immigrant parents regarding to their child's education?

10. What are your expectations for your child's school teachers? How often do you communicate with the school teachers? Are you get involved in school affairs?

APPENDIX 4

Interview Guide Questions for Teachers

Name_____ Gender____ Teaching Grade _____ School _____

1. Do you often reach Chinese children? Do you know a little bit Chinese culture?
2. Do you notice any difference regarding to academic achievements between the Chinese children and other Quebec children in your classroom?
3. How do you think of the Chinese children's performance and language ability in school?
4. What are your expectations of the Chinese children in your classroom?
5. What are their advantages in school? What are their disadvantages in school?
How did you help them?
6. What do you think of the involvement of the Chinese parents in school? Do you communicate well? What are your expectations of them?
7. How do you define a child who is successful in school? What are the criteria for a child who fails? (Ask for a report card if there is).

APPENDIX 5

Interview Guide Questions for Children

Name _____ Gender _____ age _____ grade _____

length of residence in Montreal _____

1. Do you like the school? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
2. Do you like learning French? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
3. Do you like the teacher? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
4. What makes the best teacher in the world, for you?
()
5. Do you like to answer questions in class? A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No
6. Do you ask questions in class? A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No
7. Does your teacher like you? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
8. Does your teacher understand you when you speak? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
9. Do your classmates like you? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
10. Do you have good friends in school? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
11. Do you think you are different than other children? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
12. Do children tease you because you look different? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
13. Does your teacher think you are a good student in the class?
A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
14. Do you feel happy at school? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
15. Do your parents speak French? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No
16. Do you tell your parents what happened in school? A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

17. Do your parents listen to you when you speak them?

A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

18. Do you think your parents understand you? (your feeling, your desire, ...)

A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

19. Do your parents check your homework? A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

20. Do your parents complain about your report card? A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

21. Do you think you are a good child at home? A. Yes B. Somewhat C. No

22. Do you go to the library, museum or theater with your parents?

A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

(Which one? What do you do there?)

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23. Do you invite your friends other than Chinese to play at your home, and, do you go to their home?

A. Yes B. Sometimes C. No

24. Do you like Canadian food? A. Yes B. Somehow C. No

25. How long do you watch TV every day? What do you watch?

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26. What is the most fun thing for you at home?

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27. What is the best thing for you about school?

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28. Do you prefer staying at school or at home? Why?

$$(\quad)$$

BULLETIN SCOLAIRE PRIMAIRE



**Commission
scolaire
de Montréal**

COMMENTAIRES DE VOTRE ENFANT

COMMENTAIRES DES ENSEIGNANTS(ES)

COMMENTAIRES DU PARENT OU DE LA PERSONNE RESPONSABLE